

# COUNTRY LIFE

VOL. XVII.—No. 421. [REGISTERED AT THE  
G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER.]

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28th, 1905.

[PRICE SIXPENCE.  
BY POST, 6½D.]



SPEAGHT.

LADY STRACEY AND HER BABY.

157, New Bond Street, W.



**THE Journal for all interested in  
Country Life and Country Pursuits**

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**SEVENTY YEARS AGO**

**I**N Longman's Magazine for the coming month there is an article of particular interest to country readers. Its heading, which we have taken the liberty to adopt, explains itself. Mr. George Bourne, the writer, has got hold of one of William Cobbett's pamphlets, and used it very adroitly to illustrate the extraordinary changes that have come over our manners and customs since the good old days when William the Fourth was King. It is true that Cobbett takes a great deal for granted, so that his hints are, as Mr. Bourne cleverly puts it, "like photographs all but faded away" of peasant life in old times. "You all know," writes Cobbett, "that your fathers or your grandfathers used to take a sack of barley to the malt-house, and bring home a sack of malt in exchange." Whatever might be the case in Cobbett's day, it is far from common knowledge now that a time was when every ploughman brewed his own beer and enjoyed it by his fireside. Cobbett laments the change, and regrets that people should be driven to the public-house for their beer, and thereby come under evil influences, to which he traces the most dire calamities. He tells us of a time when the Wiltshire labourers used to have plenty of bread, meat, and beer in the bags that they carried afield with them, and how they were reduced to cold potatoes and water. And he waxes very eloquent about the virtues of good ale, which he declares is necessary to the vigour, the activity, the good humour, and the health of the working classes. Going further, he prophesies that the peace and prosperity of the country must ultimately depend upon the soundness of the beer. Young men and maids, he says, who formerly lived in the farmhouse with their master, would no longer do so now that beer had become a luxury. The diatribe was, of course, directed against the Hop Tax, and Cobbett's practical suggestion was that "every farmer should have a little bit of hops, enough for his own use, and every labourer should have a dozen or twenty hills in his garden, and not have to go to a shop to buy hops if he were able to brew them."

How curious it is to find the demagogue of seventy years ago using the phrase "going to a shop" as indicative of the lowest depths of degradation. At least, it will appear so to the younger generation; but those of us who are old enough can remember the time when the peasant expressed his extremest

scorn of anything by saying it was "bought at a shop." Food that came from a shop he utterly despised; the food he consumed consisted of the potatoes and other vegetables he grew in his garden, and the bacon that was fed in his own sty. As to all his tools and implements of one kind and another, he prided himself on being able to make them. Mr. Bourne tells us "his clothes are bought ready made, but they used not to be in Cobbett's time, or for years afterwards. One woman at least I know who, as a girl, helped her mother at making the now obsolete smock-frocks of the rustic labourers." Even when smock-frocks were beginning to cease in the land, the rustic did not think of going to a ready-made shop to purchase his outfit. On the appointed day he had the tailor come to his house. Smokey arrived carrying his goose under his arm, established himself comfortably on the kitchen-table and sewed all day long, taking as part of his wages the rough but wholesome food provided by the labourer; and the clothes thus made were of very different quality to the rags now to be obtained so cheaply at the village shops. Mr. Bourne enumerates many other changes that have taken place. The commons have gone, and with them the cow that used to supply the cottage with milk. It is perfectly true that the cottager who wants milk to-day must imitate him who wanted hops in 1832, and go to the shop for it. Mr. Bourne laments again that the rustic's opportunities of sport are now sadly diminished. All that remains of it is a little furtive poaching and sly ferreting, with some squirrel-hunting on a Saturday afternoon thrown in. There has been during the last three-quarters of a century a steady movement towards keeping the rustic strictly between the two hedges-rows that bound the road. Mr. Bourne greatly regrets that the beverages dear to our grandfathers have almost ceased to exist. We say almost, because Mr. Bourne may be assured that there are at least one or two old labouring men who, to a visitor they like, will produce very old samples of cowslip wine, elderberry wine, a wine decocted from hips and haws, and various other curious and delectable beverages that they have had in their possession for the space of a generation. All the same, for this kind of thing the adventurous traveller may be warned that he will probably do better at a shop. The home-made wines of our forefathers may have been excellent drinking, but they taste somewhat cold and sour to a degenerate modern palate.

Mr. Bourne raises a piteous lament over the loss of the power of self-help in labourers. In his part of the country he finds that the cottager can still mend his own and his children's boots, but reluctantly confesses his fear that he will not do it much longer. He used to make handles for his garden tools, but the shop has stepped in and provided them cheaply. "If his wife goes hop tying he need not go weeks beforehand to cut the rushes for her use, or encumber his cottage floor with them, and then at last scald them to give the needful lissomness; for bast is purchasable, and if not quite so good as rushes for tying hops, still, it will serve." He used to dig turf, and carry wood for his fire, but now coal will serve. Very old rustics still remember the time when they got up, and in the dim morning light groped for the tinder-box, and had such a work to get the touch-paper to burn. Now the shop sells the matches and the oil and the firing. This has an effect that few people appreciate upon legend and rustic lore. In old days—in fact, right up to the sixties—light and fire were very precious commodities in the village, and had to be used most frugally. The cottage that could turn on a good log fire was often the resort of village characters—tailors and pedlars, and odd men who had nothing particular to do. These would gather to the one comfortable kitchen, and, resting their weary limbs on the wooden settle, which had a tall back to keep the draughts away, they would, like old Simon, "lunt their cutties," and go over the old stories, the old jests that had been handed down from their forefathers, the old ghost stories that had been told when they were running about in pinnafores, adding here a little and there a little to intensify the drama or touch up the horror of the legends, but spending the long winter night couthily and cannily in a way entirely unknown to this generation, which has infected even the slumbering rustic with its feverish unrest. It is half in laughter half in sadness that we dwell on these manifold and intrinsic changes. From one point of view they may be pronounced good, for in those old days cold and hunger and disease were foes that could not be kept away; but, on the other hand, the peasantry that grew up under such conditions were a sturdier, harder, and more independent class.

**Our Portrait Illustration**

**O**UR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Lady Stracey with her little son. Lady Stracey is the daughter of Mr. Algernon Brinsley Sheridan of Frampton Court, Dorset, and was married in 1902 to Sir Edward Paulet Stracey.



**I**T would be idle to comment on the extraordinary events which are now taking place in Russia and attracting the solemn attention of the civilised world. What happened in the first French Revolution is being repeated with slight variations at St. Petersburg, and threatens to spread over the entire Empire of the Czar. Nor can we wonder at it. A kind of obscurantism has kept Russia hanging in the wake of civilisation until her Government has become an anomaly. Science, progress of every kind, have been speaking trumpet-tongued these many years to the oppressed subjects of the Czar. Since Canute bade the waves retire no man has occupied a more absurd position than that of the potentate who has refused to budge, and kept up all the ancient paraphernalia of power and oppression, while light of every kind was springing up all around. Perhaps it is not wholly unfortunate that the seat of the Czars at the present time should be occupied by one who is as great a weakling as the weakest of the English kings, Edward II., for example. If a more resolute man had been in the seat of power, the bloodshed and destruction would have been still greater; but hope for a happy ending lies in the feebleness and indecision of the Czar. But at present it must be said that hope is extremely feeble. The same Russian Government which went to war without counting the cost, that completely under-estimated the resources and preparedness of the Japanese, has shown itself wholly incompetent to deal with the crisis that has arisen, and no one knows what a day may bring forth. History of the most sanguinary description is at present being written over that great empire before the eyes of the whole world.

That complications are almost bound to result is only too probable. In the end, selfish and monetary considerations have almost more to do than anything else with foreign policy, and, unfortunately for the rest of Europe, a great part of the wealth of France, and a considerable proportion of that of Germany, are invested in Russian securities. In other words, it is to the interest of two of the greatest military countries in Europe, first, that there should be no disastrous ending to the war with Japan, and, secondly, that no sweeping revolution should take place in Russia. Yet the form of intervention must offer a puzzle to statesmen. They may try to repeat what occurred after the Chinese War, in other words, make an attempt to bully Japan out of the advantage she has gained; but events have changed since then. Japan, so to speak, had only won her spurs as a fighting nation. Now she has taken a front place. At that time our disposition towards the Mikado and his subjects was one of friendly goodwill only. To-day she is our ally, and if any other country were to intervene in the quarrel it is impossible to say how with any sense of honour we could stand out. Such a state of things must fill the mind of every thinking man with grave concern.

Among the fatalities resulting from the collision at Cudworth, by far the most mournful is the death of the talented young painter, Mr. Robert Brough. He was only thirty-three years of age, and every year saw him coming more rapidly to the front as a portrait painter and an artist, whose figure studies were not excelled by any contemporary. Practically speaking, he had fought his own way to the fore, the friends he had in his native Aberdeenshire not being persons of wealth and influence, who could have pushed him on to fortune. Yet success seemed to have marked him for her own. He was admitted to be the most brilliant student who had passed through the Royal Scottish Academy schools in recent years, and at the moment of his death he was engaged on what looked likely to prove an important and fine work, namely, a painting of the children of Sir William Tennant of The Glen. To measure his achievement, it has to be remembered that he was born as late as 1872, and that the early years of his life were passed as apprentice to Mr. Andrew Gibb, lithographer and engraver. How he passed from this position

to that which he occupied when the unfortunate accident took place will, one day, form a mournful chapter of biography.

Few places in the British dominions are so cut off from the outer world as the island of St. Kilda, which every year, from September to June, is almost entirely deprived of communication with the "neighbouring island" of Great Britain. Yet it has its own method of sending messages during the lonely period, and the other day letters from the island arrived in Glasgow only five days after they left the island, having been placed in a tin inside a hollow block of wood, and dropped into the sea on a north-westerly wind. On this occasion the "St. Kilda Mail" was picked up on the west coast of Lewis two days after it was launched from the island sixty miles distant, having accomplished the passage with a speed and punctuality which in all the circumstances is certainly rather remarkable.

#### MOON-SPELL.

Slow mounts the moon where yonder hills are met;  
While the spent noon  
Fades in pale lines of flame to westward yet,  
Slow mounts the moon.  
Faint gusts of wind among the rushes croon;  
The bay is set.  
A silver cup where Love may drink and swoon.  
Forgetting all the toil and vain regret,  
The vanished boon,  
Since overhead,—Sleep's mystic amulet,—  
Slow mounts the moon.

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

A very practical step has been taken towards the advance of rural education by the appointment of Mr. T. S. Dymond to an Inspectorship under the Board of Education, and to act as special adviser in matters of rural education. His counsel will also be asked in regard to matters relating to Nature study in public elementary schools, and to agricultural education in evening schools. Mr. Dymond is a very practical and trustworthy official, who for some time back has acted as chemical lecturer to the Essex Technical Instruction Committee and the Essex Educational Committee. No doubt many of our readers, if they have not actually made Mr. Dymond's acquaintance, at least know him well by repute as the leader of so many of those excursions abroad in which he has taken companies of farmers, dairy-maids, and so forth, to study on the spot the methods of agriculture and dairying pursued in foreign countries. There he made friends with everybody, and has accomplished a most useful and valuable work, which has had an appreciable effect upon the efficiency of English agriculture.

Mr. E. N. Buxton, whose name is so closely associated with the preservation of commons and the acquisition by the State of open spaces for public recreation, is doing very good work in insisting upon the Post Office authorities being prohibited from disfiguring commons by erecting unsightly telephone-lines upon them. Of course, in places where no other plan is available, it is just conceivable that public interest should demand that these conveniences should be erected even at the cost of disfiguring a fair landscape. What Mr. Buxton asks does not in any way interfere with the comfort of the public. His point is that before such disfigurements are made a competent official of the Post Office should be sent to the place to report as to whether any alternative route is practicable, or, if not, what objection there is to an underground line. The common is a heritage of the public, and its amenity ought to be as jealously preserved as is that of a private estate.

Unquestionably the end which is aimed at by the society formed under the presidency of Lord Carrington, namely, the promotion of small holding, is an extremely desirable one. The movement is supported by men who have given striking proof alike of their understanding of the conditions of the problem that has to be solved, and of their patriotic wish to do the best they can for their countrymen. Among the names of those who have joined the society are those of men like Sir Horace Plunkett, Mr. Rider Haggard, Lord Stamford, Mr. Yerburgh, who are all vice-presidents, and the council is largely composed of men who have promoted small holdings on their own account, such as Mr. R. Winfrey, Mr. F. Impey, Dr. Paton, and Mr. H. Fairfax-Cholmeley. We do not quite understand, however, where the propagandism comes in which is declared to be the chief work of the society. There is no need whatever to propagate the doctrine among poor country people that it is good to have a small holding. The difficulty is rather a practical one, namely, how to get it. In our opinion the best work that the society can possibly do is to try to modify the various Acts of Parliament relating to the acquisition of small holdings, so as to render the process easy and practicable

to the industrious working-man. At present the conditions dishearten local bodies from carrying out the intentions of those who draw up the various Acts relating to small holdings.

Mr. Rider Haggard is to be congratulated on an appointment that ought to be entirely suitable to his wishes. The Colonial Secretary has nominated him to proceed as a Commissioner to Canada to enquire into the conditions of the land settlements formed there for emigrants by the Salvation Army. During the pilgrimage through England that Mr. Haggard made some years ago, with the object of ascertaining the conditions of English agriculture, he gained an experience that ought to stand him in good stead in the work he now undertakes. It is also of very great importance that a qualified man from this side should be able to give information of a kind that cannot be questioned concerning those homes for exiles which the Salvation Army is preparing in the Dominion. We notice that the expenses of the Commission are to be met by the Rhodes Trustees, and it would be difficult to mention a more useful scheme on which they could spend the funds entrusted to their care.

For some time past the forests of the United States, like those of other timber-producing countries, have shown clear signs that the rate of growth is not sufficient to make good the amount annually felled, and the question of how best to safeguard this great national asset has received thorough discussion at the recent meeting at Washington of the American Forest Congress. For some years past the Government has given effective encouragement to timber-planting in many of the States most affected; but the necessity is widely felt of more stringent measures to protect the existing forest lands. Even the strict preservation of the national forest reserves, amounting to more than 60,000,000 acres, is probably not sufficient, and it may become necessary to impose a limit upon the amount of timber which may be felled in a term of years on a given area. The discovery has been made of late years that for practical purposes a considerable reduction has to be made in former estimates of the timber-producing lands, for, even allowing for tracts which produce a growth of inferior size and market value, there are still large districts so ill-supplied with water communication that the cost of getting the "lumber" to market is practically prohibitive.

It is, perhaps, possible that there may be an appeal from the decision given by Mr. Justice Walton with regard to the matter in dispute between the owner of the Emsworth oyster-beds and the municipal authorities, whose schemes for the disposal of the sewage had so far polluted the beds that the oysters contained in them had become unfit for consumption. With the technical side of the question we have but little to do; but the learned judge is to be congratulated upon a decision which is clearly based on broad-minded principles of equity, and which will, moreover, go far, if it be only upheld, to enable us to consume the toothsome morsel furnished by a well-fed native oyster, without the haunting fear of typhoid fever. For reasons other than the purely gastronomic, it is highly desirable that our supply of home-reared oysters should be rendered clean and wholesome. Not only are they an excellent article of diet for certain classes of invalids, but they used to constitute a considerable source of revenue to a numerous class, and, until the unfortunate question of contamination from sewage arose, held a reputation, even abroad, that no foreign oyster has ever equalled.

There can be but little doubt that the long-continued physical habits of a nation make their mark upon the stature and growth of the race. Even a muscle will become completely atrophied by disuse, as may be seen almost any day in India, where certain of the fakirs are in the habit of holding one limb in a fixed position for years. The Japanese, with their never-resting spirit of investigation, have, it appears, been making enquiries into the causes leading to the shortness of stature which obtains among their people; and the chief reason would appear to be that they have a habit of sitting on their heels instead of on a chair. It is true that this position might, if persisted in, tend to prevent a development of length of leg; but, on the other hand, it would most decidedly promote the strength of the muscles of the thigh and calf, and the recent feats of the Japanese troops, both in marching and powers of endurance, are a conclusive proof that if their legs are short, they are remarkably sturdy. It is, moreover, difficult to understand why the Japanese should wish to increase their stature. They are an extremely athletic and agile people; while from a strictly military point of view, there can be no doubt whatever that under the existing conditions of warfare as governed by modern weapons, the advantage is clearly on the side of the short man, both in the infantry and cavalry; and it may also be remembered that it was a maxim of Napoleon the First that

short men made the best soldiers, one of his reasons being that in a short man the heart had less work to do to force the blood through the veins.

A letter signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and by the president of the Church Missionary Society calls attention to a very interesting memorandum drawn up by the honorary secretary of that society. The memorandum, which is virtually an appeal for mission workers in Central Africa, has its origin in the desire first expressed by Lord Cromer and Sir Reginald Wingate some three years ago, and embodied in the Blue Book "Egypt No. 1, 1903," for the establishment of a British mission on the Upper Nile. In the memorandum it is pointed out that large districts are already being worked to the south of Khartoum by the American Presbyterians and by the Austrian Roman Catholics respectively; and reference is also made to the excellent work already accomplished by the Uganda Mission. The proposed new sphere of operation for the Church Missionary Society is further south again, on both sides of the Upper Nile, so that by this influence, which will be, to quote the words of the memorandum, "industrial, educational, medical, linguistic," as well as primarily religious, a link may be established between Uganda in the South and Khartoum in the North. Apart from the more immediate result, the fact that men of the stamp of Lord Cromer and the Sirdar expressly and insistently ask for such a mission may go far to restore the confidence in the general results of mission work which the frequent attacks on it have somewhat shaken.

#### WITH WHOM ?

I arose and went in a beautiful twilight calm to a place of quiet—  
To the sunset heights, and the wide remoter West,  
For my soul was filled with the weary cry of the world, and my  
thoughts made riot,  
And I yearned for silence, and longed to be at rest,  
And a half-light lay on the desolate distant hills that was wild and  
eerie,  
And I remembered dreams, and long-forgotten things,  
How once I had looked on a pale and perilous face in a place of faery,  
And had tasted of joy, and drunk from Love's deep springs.  
And I stood once more in the shadow of haunted woods, in the  
phantom places,  
By the dark mysterious waters of ghostly streams,  
In a crimson gloom that stretched endlessly wide and deep through  
unending spaces;  
For the twilight was strange, and I remembered dreams.  
And the wild West spread to an infinite golden space where the world's  
gate closes,  
And the far woods lay in a haze of purple bloom,  
And my heart was stirred with a subtle elusive breath of forgotten  
roses,  
That once I had gathered in fairy fields—with whom?

R. G. T. COVENTRY.

To nine patients out of ten the first order of the doctor is that they shall drink no champagne. Some of the patients and most of the doctors are aware that some brands of champagne are far more harmful than others, quite apart from the fact that some of the brands are "doctored"—in a sense not very flattering to the profession. But a fact not so well understood by the patients, and perhaps not by all the doctors, is the degree in which the deleterious quality even of the same brand of champagne differs in different seasons, according to the amount of sunshine to ripen the grape and other conditions of a similar kind. It is thus that an 1892 champagne may be virtually free from injurious effects, of course provided it is taken in measure, while wine made from the same plants in the same vineyards in 1893 may not be nearly so innocuous.

Probably there are a good many who are looking out for opportunities to make capital out of the popular enthusiasm for Nelson, that is sure to find expression in this year which is the centenary of Trafalgar. It seems, and it is so far satisfactory to see, that the Admiralty is not blind to the occasion, for it is announced that orders have been given for the Lion and the Implacable, two of the old class of wooden battle-ships that have served for many years as naval training-ships at Devonport, to be towed round to Chatham and put up for sale. The special interest at the moment attaching to the Implacable consists in the fact that she formed one of the French fleet opposed to Nelson on the great day of Trafalgar. She succeeded in making her escape from that battle, but was captured as she was attempting to round Cape Finisterre. We have heard of landed proprietors, whose estate ran to the seacoast, purchasing a disused collier as "a scenery boat," and stranding it on the foreshore for the sake of the picturesque effect. The picturesque effect might be gained, with a striking access of historical interest if the old French man-of-war were put to this final use.

## LAMBING-TIME ON THE DOWNS.

**W**INTER and cold weather do not seem to be quite in harmony with so very springlike a phenomenon as the appearance of the playful and pretty lambs of which we show some photographs to-day. Nevertheless, they are not unusually early, and probably feel less discomfort from the hardness of the ground and the frozen snow than they would from a soaking rain. The pictures represent portions of the pure-bred Oxford Down flock belonging to Mr. Albert Brassey of Heythrop Park, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. Mr. Brassey's flock is one of long standing, since it was founded in 1875, and at times it has been much larger than it is at the present moment. The foundation was laid by purchases from the celebrated Blenheim flock of the late Duke of Marlborough, and later new blood was introduced from the flocks of Mr. John Treadwell, Mr. Milton Druce, Mr. C. Hobbs, Mr. E. Gillett, Mr. C. Howard, Mr. F. Pratt, Mr. W. H. Fox, and the Countess of Camperdown. At present the flock consists of 240 ewes, and the results obtained from them up to the time of our taking



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TWO DAYS OLD.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the farm-steading, the lambing-fold, as a matter of fact, adjoining the rick-yard. The plan is convenient, inasmuch as it brings the ewes within the easy surveillance of the people at the farm; but where a great number of sheep are kept, it would probably



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OUT IN THE WORLD.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

photographs must be considered highly satisfactory for a pedigree flock. On January 21st 128 ewes had lambed, and given 180 lambs. There were still 112 more ewes to lamb. The shepherd has made his arrangements in close proximity to



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SOME OF THE EWES

"COUNTRY LIFE."

conduce to better sanitation if they were taken out in the fields. The pens at Heythrop are very comfortable and well sheltered, being made of straw walls and a straw roof. When the lambs come safely into existence they are removed after a short time to an enclosure made specially for them, and from it by another step are taken to a fine meadow, where they have their first gallop over the greensward. Of course when sheep are kept so near home there is no need for the portable hut in which the shepherd lives during this important season, since his cottage is quite close at hand, and from it he is able to look after his charges. The Oxford Down ewe, it is almost needless to say, makes an excellent mother, and brings forth handsome and spirited produce. One reason, perhaps, lies in the origin of the Oxford Down sheep, which originally was a cross between the Hampshire Down and the Cotswold sheep. The latter, after enjoying a long period of popularity, went considerably out of favour a few years ago, owing to the unwieldy size of the joints it provided and the relative coarseness of its fleece. The cross with the Hampshires took away these defects, or what we should call defects from the point of view of those who have to supply the wants of the consumer. The Oxford Down is, comparatively speaking, a new breed

of sheep. It may be said to date only from the year 1862, when it was given a separate place in the prize-sheet at the show held in Battersea Park. The farthest date to which its origin can be carried is 1833 or 1834, when it was produced by crossing a Hampshire Down ewe with a Cotswold ram, credit for the idea being due to Mr. Samuel Druce of Eynsham, near Oxford, who described the operation thus: "The foundation of this sheep was begun about the year 1833 by using a well-made, neat Cotswold ram with Hampshire Down ewes." Professor Wrightson comments very much to the point on this: "The Hampshire Down parent of the Oxfords we may picture as a somewhat loosely-made, big-headed, sour sheep, such as the Hampshire sheep were in the early days before they had tacked on the affix 'Improved,' and when Mr. Clare Read tells us they were 'swarming at Illesley Fair.'" For long after that they were designated half-breds, and in 1854 Clare Sewell Read suggested that they should be called Down-Cotswolds. But towards the end of the fifties they began to be generally recognised as Oxfordshire Downs. Various changes have been noted as taking place during



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AWAY FROM THEIR MOTHERS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

and the comparatively close fleece are derived from the Down, and the degree of character and uniformity which has been attained must be put down to careful selection for a period of about forty years." During that period a very great change has taken place, not only in appearance, but in weight. To meet the allegation that Shropshire sheep and Oxford Downs are



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UNDER THE SHELTER OF THE RICK-YARD.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the time in which the features of these sheep have been set. A uniform brown face has supplanted the speckled face, which was once a characteristic of them. Here again Professor Wrightson is worth listening to: "The finely-cut profile and thinner nose, and the long forelock, together with the long and thin ear, are evidently vestiges of the Cotswold parent; so also is the looser coat that is to be seen on the Oxfordshire Down. The dark face

practically one kind, the writer referred to has drawn the following distinction, which anyone may verify by examination: "The Oxfordshire head is longer, and the profile is bolder and slightly more Roman and fine; the Oxfordshire ear is long and thin, whereas the Shropshire has a shorter and rounder ear. The Oxford carries himself a little more gaily and sprightly, and his wool is rather longer and looser than that of the Shropshire.

The wool on the head of the Oxford is longer and more of the flowing nature of a forelock. That of the Shropshire sheep is closer, fitting like a continuous cap or helmet." It has to be added that the Oxford Down is a very popular sheep abroad and in the Colonies for crossing purposes, and flocks have been quite recently started in many parts of England. Apart from any question of pedigree, the sheep is a capital one to keep, since it is very profitable alike to the producer, the butcher, and the consumer. The breed is not one that gives special difficulty at lambing-time. Of course it is necessary to have proper pens prepared, and if these are made in any outlying part of the farm, it is good husbandry when the sheaves are being carried home in autumn to build a rich near the side of the pen so that an abundant supply of straw may be at hand. At Heythrop this precaution is unnecessary, since the custom is to have the lambing-pens close to the rick-yard. The management of ewes at this time is an important matter, but the



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IN THE ENCLOSURE.

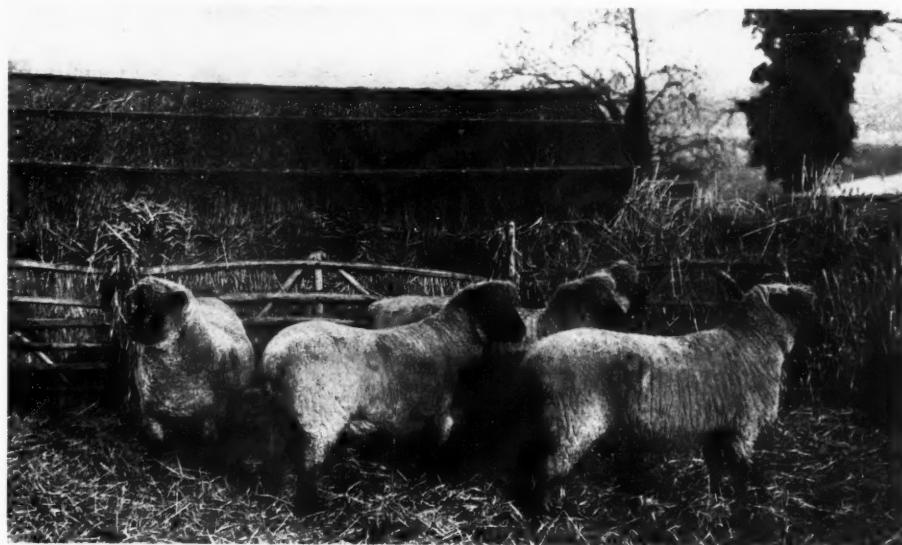
"COUNTRY LIFE."

dangers are not so much those of natural accident or disease as of carelessness. The great virtues in a shepherd ought to be those of a nurse, and we may add that Mr. Brassey is fortunate in possessing a manager for his flock who unites the best qualities of those who attend on sick persons, that is to say, he is very far from being rough in his manner—a great defect in a shepherd. He is watchful and zealous in the highest degree. He is so familiar with the animals that he knows the idiosyncrasies of each, and by instinct and experience he has found out exactly what to do in cases where lambs are produced in a weakly or unhealthy condition. A very great tribute to his ability lies in the prizes that were carried off by the flock during the course of last year, when they amply sustained their brilliant traditions, for since the year 1875 not a season has passed in which Mr. Albert Brassey has not figured as one of the most distinguished prize-winners of the day.

## ROOKS AND CROWS.

**I**T is nothing new to say that the Germans are more thorough in their investigations than we are in this country, and the results of an enquiry into the food of the crow tribe carried out by Dr. Schleh of Münster, as published by the German Agricultural Society, ought to be taken to heart by English farmers. No fewer than 481 separate examinations were made, and 474 are included in the report. The species examined included the rook, carrion crow, and jackdaw, and the birds ranged in age from two days to several years. The analysis gives the animal, vegetable, and mineral foods found in crop and stomach. The figures arrived at are as follows: 93·7 per cent. contained animal food of some kind, 92·2 per cent. vegetable food. It is therefore plain that the most ordinary diet was a mixed one of animals and vegetables. In 61 per cent. of the birds there were found seeds of agricultural plants and forest trees. As many as from 150 to 400 grains of corn were found in several birds, while many rooks and nestlings contained over 50 grains each. Yet only a comparatively small proportion of

bird had apparently eaten an average of six and a-half beetles. Wireworms and chafer beetles were found in great quantities. In some instances a single rook had eaten more than sixty wireworms, while apparently the dam and her mate had found chafer beetles the most easily procurable food for their offspring, one unfortunate nestling rook having had no fewer than forty chafer larvae crammed into it, which must, if at that early age it knew its Gilbert, have put it in mind of toffy. In every case it was



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YEARLING EWES.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

found that the old birds fed their young with the same food that they were getting for themselves, and at the breeding season this seems to have consisted almost solely of insects. Were this report to stand exactly as it was written, it would afford conclusive evidence that rooks and carrion crows are, on the whole, on the side of the angels. But Dr. Schleh points out what we know very well in this country—that the birds vary in their habits with the districts, and we do not know how far these analyses are to be accepted as typical. During summer, when the ground was very dry and the rooks had nestlings to feed, we have found that in a pastoral country they have been put to hard straits. Grubs and insects have dived down to the deepest recesses they can find. Worms are asleep in their fastnesses, and the rooks are almost ready to perish.

In such circumstances they very quickly develop predatory habits. Dr. Schleh makes no mention of eggs in the results of his examination, but there is not the slightest doubt but that eggs are taken in this country. We have seen old rooks quartering a hayfield like retriever dogs till they came upon a partridge's or a pheasant's nest, when they devoured the eggs without the slightest hesitation. They also steal the eggs of ducks and farmyard fowls. Under such circumstances, too, they become much more carnivorous than usual, and will chase either small birds or small mammals, carrying off whatever they can get hold of so long as there is meat on its bones and blood in its veins. Dr. Schleh gives other examples. He says that on the coast members of the crow family may subsist on shellfish refuse. In forests they gather the seeds from the trees and pick up the small rodents. In the neighbourhood of rivers they capture fish. After all, then, a German report cannot be quite satisfactory to an English reader, though it is a fact not to be lost sight of that the German investigators are divided



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YEARLING RAMS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the whole seem to have fed on cereals. Seeds of noxious weeds were found in 7½ per cent. of the birds, one carrion crow having itself eaten fifty-eight seeds of polygonum. Farmers will naturally want to know what the animal food consisted of. It included most of the creatures that are considered most inimical to good husbandry—rats, mice, moles, birds, spiders, worms, millipedes, and a great variety of insects, more especially beetles. Actually 78 per cent. of the birds contained insects, and each

in their opinion. Some believe rooks and crows to be useful to agriculture, while others hold them to be very injurious. To the former opinion Dr. Schleh inclines. He holds that rooks are more useful than harmful, and especially in the breeding season. We have no doubt whatever but that he is right in all the normal districts, that is to say, where the birds exist only in moderate numbers; but in this country they have been allowed to multiply to an enormous extent. Even in

old days Acts of Parliament had to be passed ordering the destruction of crows and choughs; but in our time many of the natural enemies of these birds have been deprived of their means of attack. For example, the village gunner used always to look forward to a day at shooting crows as one of the delights of his existence; but then our revenue authorities became categorical in the matter of demanding licences, and so the gun passed out of employment. Worse than that, the gunner himself disappeared. Our young rustics, wrongly educated at the Board schools, no longer regard shooting as a natural recreation. Indeed, the school children have lost the spirit and courage to

climb to the nests. Again, rook-pie, which used to be regarded as a delicacy, has now ceased to tickle the fastidious palate of an overfed generation; and, further, we have so many Wild Birds' Protection Acts that the killing of feathered creatures has been greatly reduced. In consequence, not only have the old rookeries maintained their population, but what are called summer rookeries have been spread all over the land; and the farmer, despite the inclination towards humanitarianism that characterises the time in which he lives, has come to think that he could do with fewer of those black marauders whose names the Ettrick shepherd used to say should be written in the Devil's books in longhand.

## LIFE OF A TAME FOX.

**W**HEN only three days old my tame fox narrowly escaped death owing to an old dog fox, "close run by full-crying hounds," seeking sanctuary in her nursery. Being the only cub, I put her in my pocket, and on reaching home she was soon revived from her shakings by being given lodgings in an incubator drawer. Owing to her colour being black at this stage of her life, she was christened Satan. For a week she lived in the incubator, by which time she had thriven so well—not on chickens, as might be expected, but on milk and sugar from a baby's bottle—that she was able to live in a box in the stable. When she was about three weeks old, a live sparrow was placed in her box at night. On going next morning to kill it for her, no sparrow was to be seen, but three weeks old Satan looked fat and happy, whilst a second sparrow sitting outside chirruped sadly—"Alas, my poor brother!"—as one or two brownish grey feathers floated out of the stable door. After this Satan lived on sparrows and milk. When about six weeks old she was promoted to a "run" outside, placed in a box at night, and allowed to enjoy a scamper on the lawn on fine days, though never far from heel. Young ducks enjoyed the tender grass of the same lawn at this time of year. Satan, in her turn, was sure she would enjoy the tender ducklings (the life of one was only spared by her trying to retrieve two at once). When only seven weeks old, an almost full-grown rat was put into her run. Satan immediately seized it by the shoulders, and shaking it like a terrier, had it in a few seconds ready for eating, a feat which was soon accomplished. After this her diet consisted of rabbits, mice, sparrows, rats, and bread and milk. Ever since she was eight weeks old she has lived in her wire run at night, and has run about the garden in the daytime. Owing to never being chained, and having had plenty of exercise, she has never been afflicted with any of the various ailments that tame foxes are liable to.

Satan takes a great interest in horticulture, which she is fond of studying from the commanding position of a gardener's back—as seen in the illustration. She has decided opinions of her own about gardening, which she airs by digging up any new plant she takes a dislike to. She is a lover of fruit, and stripped many a bunch of red currants when that fruit was ripe. She also delights in apples and pears when ripe. She has a sweet tooth, and cake is a delicacy to her. After horticulture, games are her strong point, the chief of these being croquet. Those people who are enthusiastic about the game get rather put out when they find their ball 6ft. away from the hoop for which they had positioned it, and cast a suspicious glance at Satan, who is sitting near, innocently looking on, apparently interested only



Gibson.

A TIT-BIT.

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in the game. The next time the enthusiast's turn comes to play, both ball and Satan have disappeared. She also comes and umpires at tennis; but only for a short time, the game either being too uninteresting or the balls too tickly, and she soon returns to her croquet.

Satan's canine friend Rex is a small-sized greyhound. These two have great sport, chasing each other round the garden in fine style, jumping the fences like steeplechasers. When the fox is being chased by Rex, she turns in the most remarkable manner. Using her brush as a rudder, she can turn at right angles while going at top speed. To make the dog chase her she playfully bites the end of his tail. She delights to be tickled under the chin, shutting her eyes and appearing in ecstasies of bliss while one is doing it. When first let out in the morning, she rushes round and round, barking like a puppy. She does not mind her paws being shaken or her ears being pulled, but her brush must be held sacred. Pull that, and you are reminded by a very doggish growl that you are trespassing.

With regard to her food, Satan objects to crows, jackdaws, blackbirds, thrushes, and hedgehogs. Pigeons are perhaps her favorite tit-bits, and, as shown in the photograph, she is very determined to make the best use of her opportunities. Satan is a failing—tobacco chewing. Sad to relate,



Gibson.

MOUNTING THE GARDENER'S BACK.

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she indulges in this vice whilst gardening, often getting a chew from the gardener's roll of twist.

Satan showed us a sample of her instinct the other day. Her friend Rex caught a hare, about 300yds. from where she was lying, and on hearing its squeals she dashed through the hedge and steered straight for the scene of action. Satan has a splendid nose, and digs up bones which must have been buried years ago. She is a great hunter for birds and mice, and brings down many a sparrow from its perch on a low tree. All the meat she cannot at once consume she buries.

Satan is quite an affectionate pet, and though at first naturally very timid, she has gradually, with increasing age, overcome her shyness. A remarkable incident occurred lately, which exemplifies how fearless she has become. A party of four guns was partridge-shooting in a field bordering the garden. When they were banging away within 30yds. of the hedge Satan calmly jumped on to the top of the latter, and surveyed the proceedings with great interest. It was only the forbidding appearance of a big black retriever that persuaded her not to make a lunch off one of the fallen birds.



Gibson.

Copyright.

**PICKING UP A CROQUET BALL.**

## THE TREE OF . . . KNOWLEDGE.

**O**N a fine day Battersea Park is as pleasant a garden to walk in as any of its kind in London; but to none, I think, can it give so much pleasure as to one who remembers it as a place of desolation—a flat, treeless, squalid expanse of river-side ground. Not always had it been so with Battersea fields; indeed, nothing in human nature itself could more plainly express in looks the misery of having seen better days. Near most great towns there are similar spaces—"unoccupied" is the usual name for them—seeming so conscious of degradation since the time when they were fresh woods and fields that no kindly eye can bear to look upon them long. Such was the forlorn condition of Battersea fields within the recollection of many Londoners; and to think of them as they were, and then to look around upon Battersea Park, with its broad lawns, and its shining little lake, and its winding paths among richly-clustered trees, is to draw into the mind confidence and hope, as well as gratefulness at the sight of beautiful and cared-for things. Therefore I love to walk in that place, and do so, if only for a little while, whenever I go near it.

Such an occasion happened a few weeks ago, in one of the blessed intervals of sunshine that have chequered this dark winter. I was to take my luncheon that day in Cheyne Walk, and so allowed myself time beforehand to go over the bridge to the park at its foot. The morning was lovely: warmth in the sunshine, spring in the air, and a thrush on a topmost spray singing his first song. (Well, parts of it.) Now, the thrush's song is best described by the two words I have just used, hope and confidence, and therefore, as I heard it, was truest to time, place, occasion. And then I must look to see if there weren't any signs of leaf-bud about; and, having found one such here, one such there, among the bushes, particularised no further, but went rambling along as part of the general gratitude and gladness.

There are some pretty nooks and corners in Battersea Park—even, though one could not have thought it, a sub-tropical garden. To these I resorted, and for a time thought myself alone in them. Presently, however, on turning into a side path, I came upon the small, spare, large-headed, white-haired figure of a man, seated as if for a few moments' rest where the sun shone full on a sheltered recess. I could but look twice at him, so closely did he resemble that first though not foremost of the Free Trade leaders who lived beyond all the rest into a beautiful and wise old age. His rather tumbled attire carried out the likeness; and though he had not—very few men have—C. V.'s unvarying air of gentle distinction, the gentleness was there at any rate. The stranger had been reading a newspaper, apparently. It now lay folded on his knee, and as I passed he was looking down at it in an evident mood of abstraction.

The paths in that corner of the park being rather maze-like, in little more than five minutes I found myself passing the stranger again. As I did so he rose and came into the path so unobservantly that there was a slight collision between us. Hats lifted and pardon asked on both sides; after which, wanting an excuse for looking a moment longer at the fine face before me, I pointed to the newspaper, saying, "Any fresh news of importance

this morning?" Moving as if to walk on with me, he answered, "Nothing fresh, but something more. You speak of the war in Manchuria?"—I nodded.

"There is this," he went on, speaking very softly, as one might at the bedside of a sick child. "A strong fort has been blown up. The Japanese soldiers tunneled many yards through solid rock, lodged two tons of dynamite in the mine, brought down the walls with those two tons, poured in upon the garrison, who stood and fought till most were killed, but some found a way of escape."

"Splendid!" said I. "Magnificent!"

"The valour of the fighting-men?"

"The bravery of them, one and all, Jap and Russ. Lion-like. No exaggeration this time."

"You do them less than justice. The lion was mistakenly exalted above other beasts at a time when he was supposed to be generous, and when the troubadours—the troubadours, I think—had introduced a similar spirit into warfare. What has become of that ideal, or perhaps I should say what is to become of it, appears for the moment uncertain. But as for the lion! . . . his generosity is well understood nowadays to have been a mistake for a certain weakness of character; and it is time, don't you think? that his honours were openly transferred to the nobler beast that has no nonsense about him."

This address, which was spoken in a voice and with a manner quite like a confiding child's, I hardly knew what to make of. A gentle and perhaps a sad irony, however, seemed to be the probable interpretation of it, and the more so as I had been making up my mind that my companion was a relic of the older Wesleyanism and once a preacher. On that cue I said:

"I don't think you quite like this war, and am uncertain as to whether I rightly grasp your allusion to the nobler beast."

"I confess," said he, "that there have been wars that I liked better than this one. As to your other question, what do the naturalists say? They say the tiger."

"But what do you say?"

"I say the tiger."

"You do not shift the lion's honours higher in the animal creation?"

"No, no! Indeed, no! But I read in many books, and sometimes I have had terrible thoughts and imaginings of late. A John Bunyan of to-day could hardly go further," he added painfully after a pause, "only he would know better what to think of them."

"May I say, then, that I fancy I saw one of these thoughts clouding your face when I passed you unobserved just now? You had that news at heart."

"No doubt; but I was thinking of the second chapter of Genesis."

This brought me to a stop, and perhaps to an unseemly glance of enquiry. "Come," said he, placing a timid hand on my arm, "and ask yourself whether I should talk so freely if you were as much a stranger to me as I am to you." With this, he gave me his card, which enabled me to say that now I better understood his being lost in the Book of Genesis. "But why the second chapter, and what has it to do with the war?"

"Why the second chapter of Genesis? Because it is there and in the next that we read of the Tree of Knowledge. And what has it to do with the war? A thought connects them which one of the old Bible commentators would have made a book of. I myself, in my youth, used to mine in the mysterious passages of Scripture of which those about the Tree of Knowledge are part, with the harvest of headache which was all I'd a right to expect. Imagination without reason conscious to itself is madness; and under what light could the writers of those Bible chapters

conceive that knowledge would bring heavy penalties upon mankind? A pride and power of intellect that would arm self and exalt it, bear down faith, exterminate the makings of religion, and tread every gentle feeling under foot, supplied the common answer to the question; and not long ago a princely personage died in France who might have been sent into the world to show by one perfect example how that could be."

"But you do not go back to this answer?"

"No; and it was once so common—and is still, no doubt, where such matters are thought of at all—that its renewal in any one mind would not be worth mentioning. No, it is this."

And then began an outpouring, as we walked up and down, such as I daresay Bunyan's neighbours heard sometimes with more emotion than understanding. Impossible for me, however, to reproduce the flame of my companion's discourse. I was to look to the state of the world, of the nations of the world. To bring them into one view. To see how eagerly all of them, each with its eyes upon the rest, were gathering the forces of destruction: more of these nations, and mightier, than ever contributed to such a spectacle at one and the same time since war began. And again I was to mark that in all these tremendous preparations there was something which, in its extent if not in its character, might be thought new—the fatality of them. They went on far less wilfully than under pressure of considerations and impulses which all went under the name of *necessity*. They were everywhere felt, indeed, as absolute necessity; though the conditions that made them so were artificial, the product of invention, and even such invention as contributed to satisfy while enlarging the needs and cravings

of mankind. It had long been a familiar reflection that the grand characteristic of modern civilisation was the sudden development of the scientific faculties—those that go deepest into the secrets of Nature, or, as we should have said a while ago, of Creation. And a blessed thing was the new-found genius for discovering these secrets, seizing them, and turning their prodigious forces to the commonest service of mankind. Yes, so far; and if only that were all! But all the while this same genius was ceaselessly employed in giving to the nations of the world, one after another, vaster and vaster means of mutual destruction: what is more, there is hardly one of its gifts to peace and well-being that is not at the same time provocative of strife, its temptation or facilitation. Railways, steamships, telegraphy, the applied forces of electricity, how immensely they have added to the substantialities of comfort! But whether they do not multiply needs in excess of their satisfaction begins to be doubtful; while, by abolishing distances and erasing frontiers, they bring competition and contention into an ever-narrowing area. And meantime—meantime this same scientific genius is more ardently devoted to discoveries that may give to war such terrors as could only be dispensed, we once thought, by the forces of Nature or the hand of God. The same, indeed. "But all this," said my companion, "is familiar to you as matter for reflection. To me it brings a new vision of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and a glimmer of understanding where I had none before."

With these words he turned abruptly into a bye-path and disappeared.

F. G.

## CURIOS RACES OF THE GOLDFISH.

**E**VERYBODY knows the goldfish as it usually appears in glass globes and ornamental waters. But few people realise the enormous degree of aberration in form which it has undergone by the patient efforts of human selection; and a few examples of the extraordinarily monstrous forms that have been fixed by Chinese and Japanese breeders are here given, with the object of showing that this fish can compete with the most eccentric forms ever obtained by similar processes among animals, birds, or plants.

The goldfish is derived from a sort of carp inhabiting China and Japan, which is now generally regarded as an Eastern race of our Crucian carp, of bronzy brown or olive brown coloration. The bright golden or red colour which is characteristic of the domesticated form, is to be regarded as a sort of albinism, known as icterism, which affects many other members of the carp family, and has likewise been fixed in such aberrations as are known under the names of golden carp, golden orle, and golden tench. It does not appear until some time after birth, and if the fish are allowed to run wild, they soon revert

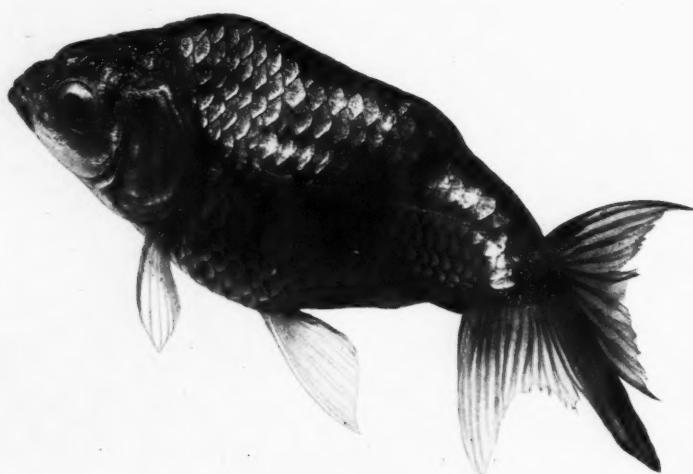


THE ORIGINAL TYPE.

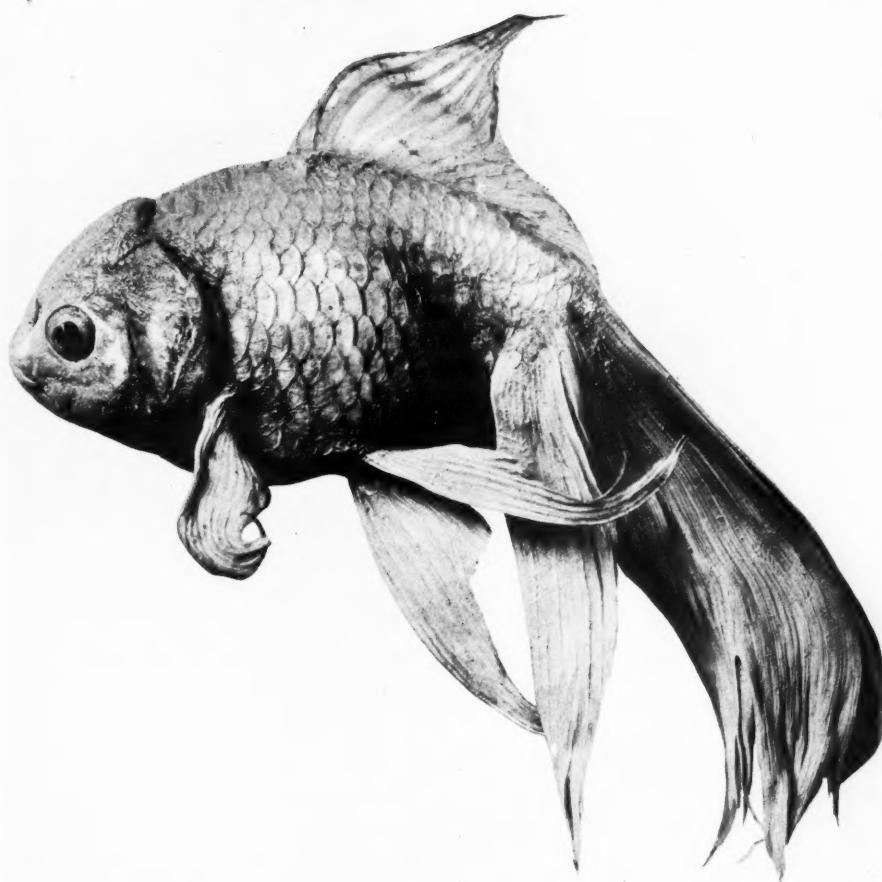
to the typical coloration. The domestication of the goldfish by the Chinese dates back from the highest antiquity, and they were introduced into Japan at the beginning of the sixteenth century; but the date of their importation into Europe is still uncertain.

The great German ichthyologist, Bloch, thought he could trace it back in England to the reign of James I., whilst other authors fix the date at 1691. But it appears certain that they were brought to France only much later, as a present to Mme. de Pompadour, although the de Goncourts, the historians of the mistresses of Louis XV., have failed to trace any records of this event. Since then the fish has spread all over Europe, and in many places it has reverted to its wild condition. In many parts of South-Eastern Asia, in Mauritius, in South Africa, in the Azores, it has become thoroughly acclimatised, and successfully competes with the indigenous fresh-water fishes.

Some thirty years ago, as we are informed by Professor Vaillant, it was introduced into Madagascar, with regrettable results. This great island is very poor in edible fresh-water fishes. Nevertheless, it possessed, in tolerable abundance, a few kinds of perch-like fishes of the family Cichlidi, somewhat



THE FAN-TAIL.



THE VEIL-TAIL.

smaller than our British perch, the flesh of which was much appreciated. But one day the Queen Ranavàlona placed in the small ponds of her palace garden a few beautiful goldfish as an ornament and curiosity. The new environment was evidently well suited to the fish, which thrived and multiplied beyond all expectation; torrential rains causing the ponds to overflow, they were carried into neighbouring rivers, and have since spread over a considerable part of the country. Breeding much more rapidly than the indigenous fishes, they soon took their place, devouring their eggs and fry to such an extent that the excellent native perches are now in process of extermination, to be replaced by a perfectly worthless alien, which, whilst it has lost the ornamental colours to which its introduction was due, and reverted to its original olive brown dress, has in no way improved in quality as an article of food.

Not content with cultivating the goldfish for the beauty of its colour, the Chinese and Japanese breeders have also succeeded in fixing most extraordinary structure deviations from the normal form. Many of these, consisting in an abbreviation of the body, an excessive protuberance of the eyes, suppression or extraordinary development and duplication of certain fins, have long been known from Chinese pictures. A picture-book published by Sauvigny in Paris at the end of the eighteenth century gave copies of a great many of these figures, and enumerated a large number of these extraordinary races. But although some of the earliest specimens brought to Europe, such as one described by Linnæus in 1749, appear to have belonged to them, it is only since 1872 that living specimens have been brought over to Europe in sufficient number to be bred from; they are now to be seen in many aquariums. The rarer forms are much sought for, and fetch high prices. The

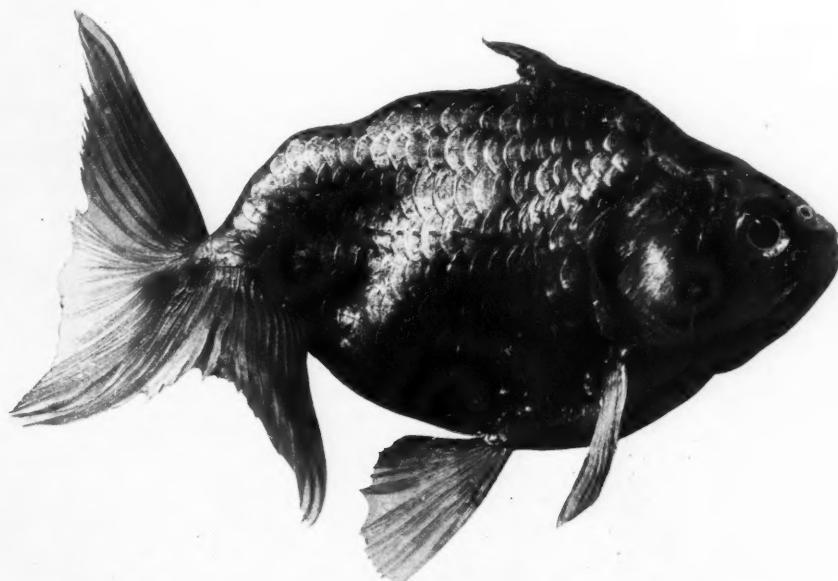
finest specimens in this country have been kept by Captain Vipan at Stibbington Hall, Wansford, from whose collection some are here figured. It would be impossible in this article to allude to all the races which are recognised among fanciers, but the following will suffice to give an idea of the amount of difference which they present.

The first figure represents a specimen from Corea, the wild form, out of which the domesticated races have been evolved. The second figure represents the fan-tail, in which the body has become abbreviated, and the fins highly developed; the tail fin especially is very remarkable for its trilobate form, this being due to the duplication of the lower lobe and the folding over of the single upper lobe.

In the third figure we have the veil-tail, remarkable for the still more excessive development of the caudal fin, which, owing to its great length and transparency, suggests a veil. In this fish, the anal fin, situated behind the ventrals, and which in the ordinary goldfish, as well as in all normal fishes, is single, has become paired, like the lower lobe of the caudal. Adipose tissue forms a swelling on the upper surface of the head. Such fish are also called hooded goldfish.

In the fourth figure we see the dorsal fin very much reduced, and it has quite disappeared on the specimen represented in the fifth figure. This represents the telescope fish, so called from the

great protuberance of the eye-balls, which project out of the orbits, and are directed forwards. Whilst in the sixth figure we have the star-gazer, with the protruding eyes looking upwards. The latter race is by far the rarest of all, and was first received from China in 1894. A race has also been produced in which the scales are absent. The characters which we have noted above may occur in every possible combination. Thus



TELESCOPE FISH WITH REDUCED DORSAL FIN.

there are telescope fish with or without dorsal fin, with or without the fan-tail or veil-tail, with single or double anal fin, etc. There are also differences of colour, red, gold, silver, black, and pied individuals, just as in the ordinary goldfish, except that the red often assumes a more brilliant scarlet. A bright red veil-tail, with its transparent white caudal fin, is really a beautiful creature in an aquarium. Very perfect specimens fetch £12 to £20 a pair.

The paired condition of the anal and caudal fins in some of these fishes is a very remarkable peculiarity, and has given rise to interesting comments from a Japanese zoologist, Watase, who made a careful investigation of the skeletal elements of the paired anal and caudal fins and of their embryonic development. The development of double folds as precursors of these fins in the embryos, seems to him to be difficult to reconcile with purely accidental productions of artificial selection, designed after the breeder's fancy and devoid of any significance whatever from the standpoint of comparative morphology, and he considers it as a case of reversion to a primitive state. He regards it as in favour of the lateral-fold theory first propounded by Thacher and St. G. Mivart, with regard to the origin of vertebrate limbs. This theory claims, in contradistinction to the gill-arch theory of Gegenbaur, that the paired fins of fishes were derived from originally continuous lateral folds, and, further, that the anal as well as the lower portion of the caudal fin arose through the coalescence of the same folds.

These highly aberrant races of the goldfish are, therefore, not only of interest as showing what can be obtained by the persistent efforts of man in artificial selection, but as



THE STAR-GAZER.

affording matter of high importance for the speculations of the student of evolution.

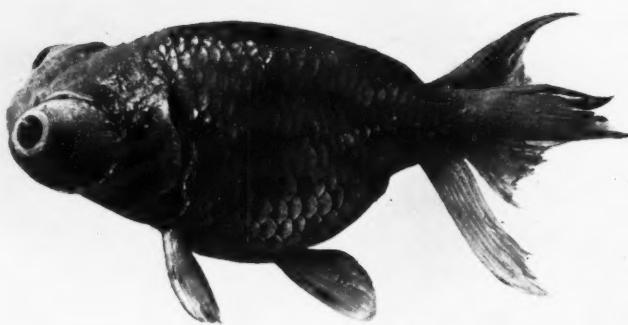
G. A. BOULENGER.

## A MAN OF IMAGINATION

**W**HEN a man begins as Eric Shaw began you may be pretty certain that you will hear of him again. I knew him first at a private school, and the biggest thing he did there was when he boiled a lot of hens' eggs in coffee to make them brown, and sold them to us for half-a-crown apiece as golden eagles' eggs. He told us blood-curdling tales of his adventures in collecting these eggs from a beetling eyrie in his father's deer-forest in Scotland. We heard afterwards that his father's only form of sport was catching butterflies, and that he had never been further North than Manchester in his life. But Eric Shaw had an imagination.

After private school I lost sight of him for a while, and the next glimpse I had of him was as the hero of a very pathetic story, told me by my old friend Sandy Fraser, who really had a deer-forest, and one of the best; had eagles on it, too, and Eric Shaw might have performed, if they had been humanly possible, some of the feats with which he regaled us as he sold us our coffee-coloured hens' eggs at half-a-crown apiece; but it appeared that stags, rather than eagles' eggs, had been his quarry on the occasion of his visit to Sandy Fraser, and of the pathetic incidents attending it.

"How the devil the fellow ever got into the house," said Sandy, narrating me the story, "I am not quite clear. I suppose I was fool enough to give him a kind of general invitation, or something. I hardly knew the fellow. Anyhow, he came, and when he had once come I'm blessed if anything would get him to go. Finally, I had to pretend I'd got the devil of a go of gout, got the doctor to order me perfect quiet, and made the doctor himself tell the fellow that it was dangerous for me to be bothered with a guest in the house—goodness knows he was the sort of fellow to send any man's temperature up. But even that did not make the fellow bolt directly; he said he could not go the next day, but would go the day after that. He had the



THE TELESCOPE.

impudence to send me in a note by my servant saying he was so sorry he was obliged to go on the next day but one, and would like just one more day's stalking, as I was not able to go out myself, before he went."

"Pretty cool," I said; "I think I recognise the man. Did you give him his day's stalking?"

"That's where the trouble begins," he said. "I did. I told him he could have his day's stalking, and at the same time I gave a note to the gillie who was going out with him to give to the stalker. In the note I said, 'Take this gentleman a jolly good walk, as hard and as long as you like, but whatever you do don't let him get a shot at a stag.'"

"Very good," I said, "very good, indeed."

"Very good do you call it?" he said, sourly. "I call it very bad. What do you think happened?"

"Happened! Had his walk, I suppose, and came in and thanked you."

"Yes, all that happened, but something else besides. When he and the gillie got up to the stalker's house they found the man's wife was away. Evidently the Devil, who has always been Eric Shaw's friend, had arranged this for him, for the woman, as it happened, was the only one within miles, excepting Eric, who could read English. It was all the stalker could do to speak or understand a single word of anything but Gaelic, much less read it. Eric saw him puzzling over the note and offered to read it. I've told you what was really in it. Instead of that Eric read out something of this kind: 'Take this gentleman into the sanctuary, and let him shoot three of the best heads you can see.' And when Eric came back in the evening he came to my room, told me, as you say, that he had had a nice walk, thanked me very much, and said he had killed three of the best stags in Scotland. However angry I was I couldn't well show him so. I was nearly bursting to swear at the stalker, but before I saw him in the morning, and had the whole thing explained, Eric was off, and I never saw him again."

"He always had an imagination," I commented.

Then I told my friend the story of Eric Shaw at our private school, and the incident of the golden eagles' eggs, and obviously the fact that others besides himself, although only private schoolboys, had been fooled by Eric Shaw was a consolation to him.

The next time that I came in touch with my friend Eric he was staying at an hotel for fishing in a place in the Highlands that shall be nameless. The prince of this world, as it seemed, had not, for once, been looking after his *protégé* as he should have done, for the water had run down so low that there was practically no fishing. With the bit of river that Shaw had taken was a small wood, in which there were said to be roe, and as the river was useless, Shaw said to the keeper, "We will drive the wood for roe." The keeper said it was impossible—there were no beaters and no guns. "How many beaters do you generally have when you beat this wood?" he asked. "Ten," said the keeper, "and about ten guns." "Very well," said Shaw, "we will do it with three beaters and three guns. How many roe do you generally kill?" "Three, the last time," said the keeper. Shaw instructed the keeper and the two beaters to go through the wood quite quietly, not making any noise at all. Then he and two more guns took their places. The keeper and the beaters went silently, as they had been told to, humouring the fancy of this obviously insane gentleman from the South. Soon, to their surprise, they heard some shooting at the far end of the wood. Before they had gone through the wood there had been a good deal of shooting, and by the time they reached the guns these had bagged eight roe dead and three wounded, of which two were secured afterwards. Therefore, instead of ten beaters, ten guns, and three roe, the sum, as done by Eric Shaw, came out at three beaters, three guns, and ten roe.

## AN OBSOLETE CORNISH SPORT.

CORNWALL, with its badger-hunting and shark-fishing, is the home of strange sports, but the hand-to-hand encounters with the grey seal, which once attracted men of all classes, are well-nigh forgotten in more modern diversions. This neglect of the Cornish seal the animal-lover likes well, but there is no fear that the publication of some very original sketches, which I lately unearthed in the library of the East Devon and Teignmouth Club, will lead to any immediate renewal of what must always have been a very strenuous, and more often than not a risky and unproductive, chase. They are the work of Mr. Burrows, once a member of the club, but dead these ten or fifteen years, a keen sportsman, joint founder of the Teign Corinthian Club, and as devoted to shooting and fishing as to yachting. He voyaged to the West Indies, and of that cruise he left a journal, illustrated by his own ready pencil, which was unfortunately never published. His expeditions after seals on the North Coast of the Duchy were a less ambitious undertaking, nor has he left any account beyond these sketches and the inscriptions appended. Unfortunately, too, all the Teignmouth



*AN ANXIOUS MOMENT.*



*HE MAKES A RUSH.*

men who shipped with him have followed him to the grave, so that it is well that the drawings tell their own tale. One thing is quite certain to all who knew the man—that these are accurate in every particular. Here and there the humorous element of this uncomfortable sport has not escaped the artist, but all the situations are depicted from memory of actual experiences. He was not the man to invent.

This method of pursuing the great grey seal into its dark and slippery caverns, with no more equipment than a torch to light the way and a club to fell the quarry, is altogether more sporting than the more usual plan of shooting the animal at sight with a small-bore rifle. The objection, from the sporting point of view, to shooting seals at all is that only the very expert save one seal in a hundred hit, however vitally, the remainder rolling over in the deep water alongside their basking-rocks, and never being seen again. For the purpose of writing his account from first-hand information, no one will deny that Mr. Millais was quite justified in wasting a few seals; but, in the ordinary way, it is questionable whether the shooting of so inoffensive and useless an animal under such conditions can be very warmly defended. To the pursuit of the seal in its native cavern this objection does not apply, for, in the first place, the animal can, and often does, make good its escape; and, in the second, when killed, it is rarely, if ever, lost.

The degree in which the Cornish seal has

succeeded in escaping notice is extraordinary. One reason for the meagreness of our information on the subject of its pursuit is doubtless to be found in the fact that those who have so hunted it belong in great part to the farming and labouring class, men who lack either the knowledge or the inclination to set down their experiences on paper. Moreover, by frequenting only caverns that are to the ordinary seaside visitor inaccessible, the Cornish seal has earned a reputation for scarcity after which it might have striven in vain on a less honeycombed coast. Personally, I doubt whether seals are much scarcer hereabouts than on the open coast of Denmark and Holland, where they are regarded as plentiful and shot every summer on the sand-banks and stone-reefs. Ray, writing in the seventeenth century, mentions seeing some of these animals basking on the Longships Rocks, where a lighthouse now stands; and Redding, in his "Itinerary" (1842), regards them as common on the North Coast, but already speaks of them as "shy of man." In olden times they were called "soyls," a name that survives in the neighbourhood of St. Ives. Mr. Tregarthen, author of "Wild Sport at the Land's End," writes me that the mermaids carved on the benches of two pews in Zennor Church suggest to him that the legends of Cornish mermaids have their origin in the periodic appearance of seals on that coast.

Though surviving chiefly on the North Coast, seals are even to-day not quite unknown on the South. They are occasionally



*"GIVE IT HIM, SIR."*

seen on the rocks between the Land's End and Logan Rock, a favourite drive from Penzance, and they are said to inhabit two ungetatable caverns close to Porthcurnow. My friend, Mr. A. T. Quiller Couch, more commonly known as "Q," informs me that about three years ago a seal was seen on the rocks at the entrance to Fowey Harbour for several days in succession. No one appears to have molested it, and the animal went its way at the end of that time.

It is, however, on the more dangerous North Coast of the duchy that the seal best holds its own, and during one week of December (1904) two were washed ashore, one of them still living, opposite Newquay. Padstow is also near some seal-caves, in what is known as Hell Bay, and here Mr. Couch's man, Grose, lived as a boy, and had an exciting time hunting seals in company with his father and uncle. Grose's own narrative is most interesting, as the method evidently tallied so exactly with that followed by the artist that the drawings might almost have been made to illustrate it.

"There is," says Grose, "a pool inside the cave, and beyond the pool a shelving bank of sand. They made an almighty snorting, and, when surprised, would dash boldly for the entrance. They came right at you. You had to look slippery, stand up, and hit them on the head at the right moment. I and my brothers took a young one, tamed him after a fashion, kept him for months, used to walk about with him at the end of a rope, and take him for a bath. Sold him in the end to a foreigner. A dirty white colour he was (the seal, not the foreigner). There was a fine old chap used to bask by himself on a rock which could be approached by the sands, but shelved down on the far side into deep water. Every time we stalked him, at the last moment he would roll quietly down into safety without a word. One day my father and uncle took a boat and let her fall down with the tide, before daybreak, close to the rock. We boys stalked along the sands from the rear. When we surprised him the old seal rolled down, quietly as usual, plump into the boat. He gave the old men more than they looked for. They stunned him in the end, but they never wanted to catch a seal in a boat no more!"

Now and then, says Grose, they would surprise a seal on the sands. If you took him on the ground hop he was not hard to catch; but it did not do to let him get a start, for when you came close he would fling up sand with his flippers till you were almost blinded. This is an interesting *ruse de guerre* which I do not recollect having seen recorded in print.

A somewhat similar method, without, however, the excitement of the encounter, is, or was, practised in Shetland, where a



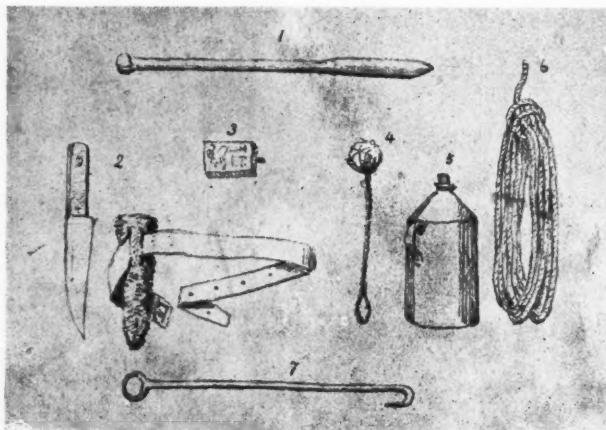
"HAUL AWAY, BOYS."

strong submerged net was stretched across the mouth of the seal-cave and the animals driven out by men in boats. But the style of seal-hunt described by Grose and illustrated by Mr. Burrows remains the most sporting of all. And, as I said before, these notes and drawings are published in COUNTRY LIFE without any fear of a general slaughter of Cornish seals resulting.

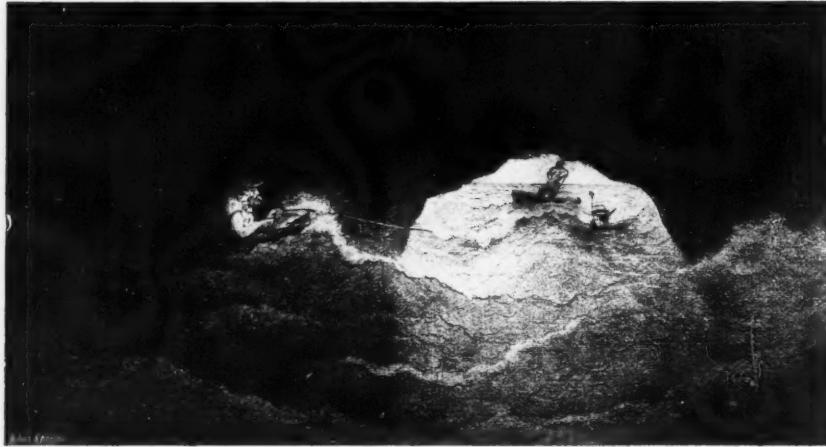
True, a few abnormally enterprising visitors lately endeavoured to hunt the seal in the vicinity of Gwithian, but the very considerable natural difficulties, augmented by the promise of a County Council interdict, have proved an adequate deterrent. So long as firearms are strictly prohibited, the seals run little risk of extermination by the method here narrated. To the average seaside visitor, less imbued with a passion for wild sport than poor Burrows, the intimate pursuit of the slippery troglodyte offers too much discomfort; and, indeed, an indiscreet and ill-planned curiosity as to the interior of some of those caves on the North Coast may have fatal results, so unexpected are the vagaries of local winds and tides. As regards the pursuit of English seals

for purely commercial purposes, even where the animals are as plentiful as in Shetland, it cannot be regarded as a highly remunerative occupation. In their isolated strongholds in the West Country, the game would simply not be worth the torch. The flesh is no longer eaten, nor, since the introduction of modern substitutes, is any great value set on the oil. It still, it is true, has its use in dressing leather and in anointing the shoulders of oxen galled by the yoke. As a lubricant and illuminant, however, the day of seal-oil is gone.

F. G. AFLAO.



STOCK-IN-TRADE OF A SEAL-HUNTER.



DAYLIGHT ONCE MORE.

## IN THE GARDEN.

TREATMENT OF YEW HEDGES AFTER PLANTING.

**W**E have received several letters of late in which a desire is expressed for some information about the treatment of Yew hedges after planting. It is not difficult to keep these in first-rate order if clipping is regularly attended to, and this should be at least once a year. After the hedge has been planted no clipping will be required until the second year, though any long shoots that stand out beyond the line of the hedge may be cut away at the time the shrubs are put in. The best month for clipping is May, and a second trimming may be done in September if the plants are growing freely and strongly. In autumn only remove any strong shoots that may have appeared since the hedge was cut in spring, and avoid anything like a regular clipping all over. A Yew hedge until it is about 6ft. high should be cut

square at the sides and flat on top; but above that height the sides should slope inwards, so that the top is only about half the width of the base. With high hedges cut square it has been found that the top grows at the expense of the base, which, in the course of time, becomes thin and unsightly. A narrow-shaped hedge also does not afford a good surface for the accumulation of snow. The way to bring a neglected Yew hedge into order is to thoroughly overhaul it, and feed the roots. Cut the growth hard back in late spring when the hedge is starting again, but not into the old wood, as it is seldom that this breaks well. The hedge should also be reduced to half its former height, a most important detail, as unless this is done the growth will not fill out below. Also dig out a shallow trench along each side, about 3ft. from the stems, and fill in with equal parts of turf-loam and well-decayed manure. Whenever a hedge shows signs of decrepitude it is wise to renew the soil; the Yew requires rich food.

#### THE USE OF SORREL.

A correspondent writes to ask whether Sorrel is much grown nowadays, and to this we must answer that it is as uncommon as Salsify and Scorzonera, two excellent vegetables which the Frenchman appreciates, but the Englishman ignores. Sorrel is a wholesome salad and a good vegetable. There are few varieties of it, and the large-leaved ones are the most nutritious and agreeable, having little of that undesirable bitterness which makes the small-leaved forms obnoxious. We are constantly urging that a greater variety of vegetables should be introduced into the English garden, and Sorrel would make a welcome change, either served alone or in the salad-bowl. A well-known grower of vegetables writes: "Sorrel is greatly improved by culture, as the leaves then become more solid and therefore more useful. As is well known, the common Sorrel is a native of Great Britain, running riot in swampy pastures. In dry soil it runs to seed. I do not recommend the British plant for garden cultivation, but the Continental variety or French Sorrel, known as the belleville. This has large leaves, sweeter than those of the common kind, and when the plant is well grown it is a delicious vegetable. It is grown largely for the Paris markets, and has a great sale. With regard to culture, this is very simple. The plant is easily raised from seed, or by dividing the roots in early March. When seed-sowing is determined on, severe thinning must take place directly the seedlings are sufficiently large to handle. Leaves suitable for salad can be obtained in two or three months, but when Sorrel is to be used as a vegetable, use the large leaves."

#### RANDOM NOTES.

*Chrysanthemum Aliman's Yellow.*—This variety is a welcome addition to the late-flowering varieties. It is purely a decorative variety of the reflexed type, flowers on disbudded plants being some 4in. to 5in. across. The flowers are rich golden yellow, stems dark, leaves deep green, lasting on the plant better than many of the late varieties. As flowering in the greenhouse at Kew it is a dwarf variety, 3ft. to 3½ ft. in height.

*The Tenby Daffodil.*—The arrival of this bright little flower in the markets is a welcome sign that the winter is passing away and the time of the Daffodil approaching. When February dawns the first of the fair array opens to the sun, and we are grateful for the patch of yellow in grass or in border. The Tenby Daffodil is the most shapely of its race. There is a crisp, happy look in the neat, evenly-formed, and pure yellow flowers which can never be mistaken for any other variety; but, alas! the bulb is so difficult to establish that the writer has lost hope. It is left to die out, and this in a

fairly moist and deep soil, in which the Narcissus family generally thrives in no uncertain way. It is expensive to be compelled to restore almost every year a Daffodil that refuses to grow, and the task has been given up. It is now grown in pots in the greenhouse.

*The Largest of all the Honeysuckles.*—The sweet-smelling Honeysuckle of the English hedgerow appeals to every lover of a flower. We enjoy it in the garden, and its presence makes one think whether the wilding has not relations in other countries. Of course this is so. The Honeysuckle or Lonicera family is of large extent, and the species that takes the first place for the size of its flower is known as *L. Hildebrandtii*. It is not a very hardy plant, but in the South of England and in very warm corners in more northerly gardens it is a success when protected during the winter months. A writer well known in gardening circles sends an interesting note about a plant in the late Mr. Ewbank's garden at Ryde, and this we publish: "For some years past I have been watching with interest one of the earliest examples of *L. Hildebrandtii* that was tried in the open air. This was planted in the Rectory garden at Ryde, where the late Rev. H. Ewbank gave it every attention. The plant has proved quite hardy and vigorous, but receives slight protection in winter. I believe the plant has been about five years in its present position, but in some unaccountable way, and long after it was well established, it died back quite suddenly, the whole of nearly three years' growth perishing as a result, and leaving only 15in. stump. Acting under my advice, the plant was not interfered with, as I observed the original stump was quite sound, and regarded it highly probable that a new break would appear. This, indeed, was realised in 1903, several feet of new growth resulting. In August of last year I was delighted to see the plant flowering as profusely as ever, and promising to again cover its old place. The rather sudden collapse of the branches appeared mysterious at first, but as the stem was perfectly sound at the ground level and for nearly 15in. above, I came to the conclusion that the injury had been caused by a cat making use of the plant for climbing or claw sharpening. I mention this so that others may be on their guard. What impresses one most of all is the intense colour of the blossoms when these are produced in the open air. Unopened buds are 6in. long. The short-jointed growth and the pale yellowish leaves, almost of the leathery texture of the Magnolia, are other characteristics of the plant when grown in the open. Under glass it will make many yards of growth in a season; but unless this is exposed to the fullest light, and sun-ripened, the shoots are too attenuated, and the leafage altogether lacking in texture and firmness, with the result that the plant flowers very sparingly. In the open, however, and fully exposed to the sun, with the shoots thinly arranged, this fine species blooms abundantly, and all who endeavour to grow the plant should ensure for it these conditions. In the old Rectory garden at Ryde the plant is fully exposed to the full force of the sun."

*Climbers for House Front.*—A correspondent asks for the names of a few of the best climbers for a red-brick house, and the answer may be useful to others. We have, unfortunately, no indication of the position of the house, and this is of course important when making the list. Clematis Jackmani, the beautiful Mexican Orange-flower (*Choisya ternata*), Passion-flower, Roses, Garrya elliptica, Azara microphylla, Magnolia grandiflora, Ceanothus azorensis, Ivy Emerald Gem or Green—it is known under both names, Aristolochia Sipho (the Dutchman's Pipe), Jasminum nudiflorum (the yellow Jasmine), Kerria japonica (the Jew's Mallow), Virginian Creeper (*Muralis* variety), and Wistaria—any of these would go well with the colouring of the wall.

## THE USES OF UNDERGROWTH.

**A**MONG the changes that have occurred in agriculture during the last twenty years, one of the most serious is the depreciation in value of the undergrowth of coppice and spinney. It used to be very remunerative to possess these bits of woodland, because the produce was in so much demand; but if one thinks of it, there is much less use now for such bushes as hazel and willow. There are old men still living who can remember when a withy-bed was of great value, and in many parts of the country it may be seen that willows have been very carefully planted along the banks of rivers. They are allowed to grow as they like now, and many are in the position of the famous willow in Hamlet, which grew "ascaunt the brook" in which Ophelia drowned herself. One imagines it as an old tree, half fallen as willows do, and extending itself over the water gathered into a quiet pool at its feet. But to take one example of the decay of the trades in which willow was utilised, it is only necessary to turn to basket-making. Here we have the manufacturer coming in with his cheap machine-made goods, while the more slowly-done hand-made article is too dear to be in request by a generation that sets so much store by cheapness. Gipsies, it is true, still make extremely pretty fancy baskets, but then the laws forbidding their squatting and camping



H. Kenney.

BUNDLING CHIPS.

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out are steadily reducing them in number, and what they do counts for nothing. Beehives, when the old straw skep was in use, also needed a certain quantity of hazel for pins; but here we have an example of a thing going out of use because of more

[Jan. 28th, 1905.]



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SHARPENING PILES.

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BORING A GATEHEAD.

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CLEAVING PILES.

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advanced ideas being held. The straw skep is now generally recognised to be a very bad home for the bees. It does not offer them the convenience for making the quantity of honey expected by the modern apiculturist. It is a refuge for all the most mischievous germs of disease, particularly the germs of foul brood, and it is much less manageable than the modern hive. Therefore it has been almost entirely supplanted by the bar-frame hive, in which the honey is worked in sections, and the occupation of making straw skeps has, practically speaking, ceased. To some extent the wattled fold, which was so common in the days when Tennyson was writing "In Memoriam," has gone out of fashion. It, again, was a form of utilising willow and hazel, and also gave employment to many men. But, though the practice of folding sheep has increased of late years, owing to the popularity of the Hampshire and other Down breeds, the enclosure is much more commonly made of netting than used to be the case. This netting is extremely cheap, as it, too, is a machine-made article, and has the further advantage of being moved easily. A single workman can run up a great deal of netting in a very little time, since all it necessitates is driving a few posts into the ground and putting the nets round them. Thus the laboriously-made wattle has been superseded.

To take another business which is not so commonly pursued now as it used to be—there is no demand for pins for thatching. In the first place, the stupid Building Bye-laws, against which we have inveighed so often and so vigorously, practically ordained that the use of thatch as a cottage roof was illegal. Possibly this may be changed now, owing to the agitation that is proceeding; but in the meantime parish councils and other little local bodies try to discourage the use of thatch by every means in their power. They contend, in the first place, that its use brings a danger of fire with it, which really is quite absurd. No sooner is the thatch put on a cottage than the rain begins to soak into it, and lichens and mosses quietly begin to invade its surface, so that as time goes on a lighted match would fall as vainly on their green carpet as it would on the grasses of a marsh. If a record were kept of the thatched houses destroyed by fire, it would probably be found that the percentage was smaller than that of any other building. Then, again, we are told that thatch affords harbourage for insects, microbes, and the other microscopical pests that science has invented to plague humanity with; but we fancy this alarm is very much exaggerated. If the microbes are thronging round, it does not make much difference whether they settle in thatch or on wood, and medical men agree that they are waging incessant war upon the individual, but that they only succeed when his tissues are weakened from other causes; and thatch is so comfortable, so cool in summer and so warm when the winter storms are blowing, that it conduces to a man's vitality, and therefore is a valuable ally in the life-long struggle with microbes which, according to the pundit of to-day, is the fate of all mortals.

Another reason for the decay of thatching is so obvious as scarcely to require statement. It is the going out of the thatcher. At one time he was an important personage in nearly every village, and found full employment all the year round in making and mending thatch, which is much more of an art than those who have not tried it are likely to admit. But, somehow, the rustic has taken a dislike to rural occupations, and particularly to that of the thatcher, so that scarcely anybody can be found to take it up. Where work of the kind has to be done, it is a matter of the greatest difficulty to find anyone who is at all capable of performing it.

All these circumstances, taken together, have combined to lessen the value of undeveloped land, and yet it has not altogether failed the land. Hurdles such as are illustrated on our pages may still be frequently seen in the country doing duty as a makeshift gate, stoppin-

a gap in the hedge, or surrounding a flock of sheep, where they form a movable fence, hundreds of miles of which are shifted every day in the week, especially where pedigree flocks are kept. For your shepherd who would carry off honours at the shows, which begin in May and last till the summer is over, must be ever leading his charges to pastures new, or, more literally speaking, to fresh fields of roots or storage. The making of these hurdles is principally a job for winter. When the autumn winds have blown away the leaves and reduced the bushes of the undergrowth to so many black skeletons holding their tentacle-like arms in the air, then come the woodmen to cut them down. When cut the wood is sorted, the twigs and light branches are bound into bundles or faggots for domestic use; and the heavier portions are stowed away on end for some considerable time, occasionally twelve months and over, to be seasoned. As soon as the wood is in a fit condition, it is first sawn into various lengths for heads, piles, and cross-bars, then split and cleaned of its bark with a spoke-shave, after which it is taken to the block and sharpened to a blunt point. The heads are next bored with gouge and brace, and mortised into a long hole to receive the rail ends, which are fastened at the outer sides of the head with wooden pegs. An old gate is laid on the ground to serve as a template, and the ten pieces are clinched together—pegged, nailed together, and the nails are turned. Then the gate is made. It has two heads, five rails, a centre piece, two cross bars, six pegs, and fifteen nails. They are sold at about £5 for a hundred, out of which the workman receives 50s., buying his own nails. A good man can make about 25s. a week at the work, which is not a bad wage, as compared with that which farm labourers are in the habit of receiving. Yet the occupation has little or no attraction for the labourers, who find that in town they can obtain more money with a lesser output of energy. At least, so they say, when asked about it, but the truth probably is that the life of the town is much more congenial to the modern rustic than is that of the country. In the one he has light, bustle, amusement, in the other long dark evenings which he finds it most difficult to fill in. One cannot wonder that he should find an urban existence more amusing than anything which he can obtain in the village; but, at the same time, it is a material inconvenience to those who wish to employ labour, and to the country itself, also, it is a cause of weakness, since, as Goldsmith sang long ago:

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay."

Another aspect of the case for keeping underwood is the amount of covert for game of all sorts and varieties. The big wood, with beautiful grass-covered glades, is undoubtedly very pleasant to the eye of the artist, but the sportsman views with more favour a wood in which it is necessary to cut rides; and while, perhaps, there are fewer large trees of handsome growth, the lordly pheasant and the humble rabbit both love thick covert, and neither will stay long on an estate where this is scanty or lacking. The annual cutting, which is necessary to keep the rides in order for the sportsman, also affords many useful bulks of firewood for the labourers of the estate, or for the owner thereof. And then, again, the sapling comes before the stately tree, and if that tree should come to its full perfection, it is necessary that it be well protected in its early years, and this can best be done by surrounding it with a number of its fellows. They can give one another mutual protection from the biting winds of March, when the buds are beginning to sprout, and, of course, the sapling which looks most healthy is the one selected for

preservation, and the greater the number the more choice there is in this selection.

A good woodman can tell at a glance which young tree is likely to thrive, and which is only fit for firewood or to be thrown away. A good woodman, however, is difficult to find, and requires years of experience before he attains any real knowledge



H. Kenney.

CLINCHING A GATE.

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of his art, and even then, unless he is a man of some natural gifts, he will probably prove a failure. We are far behind the Germans in forestry, and it is highly satisfactory to hear that the matter is being considered at our Universities. At present there are no schools of forestry to be compared with the German system of education in this really important matter. So much so is this the case, that many of those who have charge of a

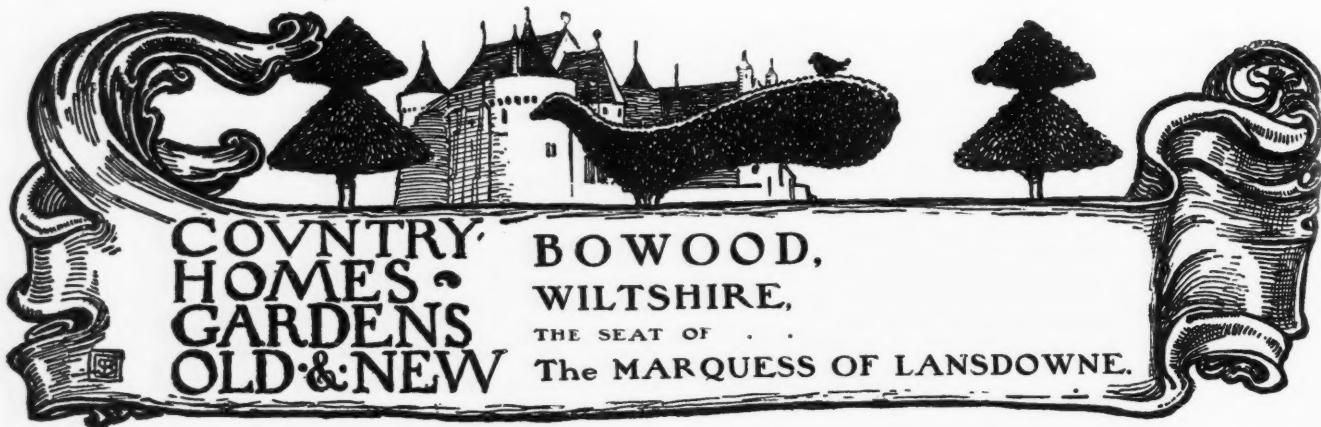


H. Kenney.

SAWING WASTE INTO LOGS.

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huge tract of jungle and forest in India and our Eastern possessions have been compelled to study for a year or two in Germany. This is a defect in our education which calls for immediate and thorough remedy. The forestry classes in the various agricultural colleges no doubt do something, but not enough to affect seriously the state of ignorance in this country.



THE noble seat of the Marquess of Lansdowne commands admiration from many points of view. Its history, as a great country house, associated with men famous in their country's story, the rich treasures of art which they have enshrined in it, and the extremely interesting gardens with which they have embellished it, all constitute sources of attraction which few great houses can surpass. The name of the place suggests its sylvan glories, and there is no part of Wiltshire more varied in the character of the landscape. One topographer has traced nine different valleys in the park, and although our pictures do not illustrate the green and umbrageous expanses of the great domain, they are enough to suggest its character. Here in ancient times were the wooded depths of the royal forest of Pewisham, which extended from Chippenham nearly as far as Devizes, and from Laycock to Calne, and it is said that James I. enjoyed the pleasures of the chase in its glades. Afterwards the forest was divided, one part coming to the ancestors of the Lords Audley and the other to the Careys, but it was dispaled during the Protectorate, and tradition says the deer were driven to Spyke Park, the Wiltshire clothiers stretching two lines of broadcloth across Lockhill Heath to form the way

by which they went. A little later Bowood was granted to Sir Orlando Bridgeman, son of the celebrated Lord Keeper, but after his death it was sold, and passed to the family of Petty Barons and afterwards Earls of Shelburne.

A considerable part of the noble structure was built in classic simplicity by John, second Earl of Shelburne, from the designs of the famous Robert and James Adam. Their work now forms the south front, with its great octostyle portico and pediment, which looks over the romantic beauties of the park and the lake to the distant heights of Marlborough and Roundway Downs. The builder was the son of Thomas Fitzmaurice, Earl of Kerry, by the sister of Henry Earl of Shelburne, and, upon inheriting the maternal estates, he took the name of Petty in lieu of that of Fitzmaurice, which has since been reassumed. His son William, third Earl Shelburne, raised to the dignity of Marquess of Lansdowne in 1784, was the celebrated but unpopular statesman, who, though not endowed with many qualities of a leader, was really much in advance of his time. He was a munificent patron of literature and the arts, and, both at his town and country houses, entertained many of the most cultivated men of the day. He devoted great attention to the



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THE ORANGERY AND THE LEANING YEW.

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COUNTRY LIFE.

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THE SOUTH TERRACES.

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LOOKING TO THE PARK.

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PARK SIDE OF ITALIAN GARDENS.

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"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE FOUNTAIN OF THE NEPTUNE STAIRWAY.

improvement of his large estates in Wiltshire, and told Johnson that "a man of rank who looks into his own affairs may have all that he ought to have, all that can be of any use, or appear with any advantage, for £5,000 a year." He greatly beautified Bowood, adding the long wing on the west side of his father's house, wherein is the orangery, taking as his model a wing of the Emperor Diocletian's palace at Spalatro in Dalmatia. This now constitutes the façade of two quadrangular courts forming the domestic offices. The Marquess employed "Capability" Brown to lay out the grounds, and though they have undergone various changes since, we may still trace the trained hand of the celebrated landscape gardener in many of the effects of the park. Lord Lansdowne is said also to have been assisted by the Hon. Charles Hamilton, whose place at Pain's Hill in Surrey was, and is, one of the most successful examples of the landscape style in England. In such experienced hands the grounds and the lake, with the cascade below, assumed their charming character.

Britton, in his "Beauties of Wiltshire," is lost in admiration

of what he describes: "In this terrestrial Elysium Nature has liberally dispensed her favours, which her handmaid Art, under the dominion of taste, has arranged and displayed in the most appropriate and becoming manner. . . . In these grounds, no inanimate leaden statues, senseless busts, nor ostentatiously unmeaning obelisks, obtrude themselves on the eye of the wondering visitant; the marquess judiciously observed, 'that those littlenesses of workmanship should never be introduced where the beauty and variety of the scenery are in themselves sufficient to excite admiration.'" In relation to which observations we may remark that the landscape gardeners did not despise, but rather welcomed, such accessories as are referred to; that leaden statues are not more inanimate than statues must necessarily be, and often have most happy effects in garden adornment; that busts are not always "senseless" in garden design; and that obelisks are not invariably unmeaning. Indeed, some analogous garden ornaments came later to the gardens at Bowood. Britton particularly ascribes the Bowood cascade below the lake to the Hon. Mr. Hamilton, who is said to have



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Copyright THE MARBLE FOUNTAINS IN THE ORANGERY GARDENS.

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STAGS OF BRONZE.

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[Jan. 28th, 1905.]



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BOWOOD HOUSE—WEST SIDE.

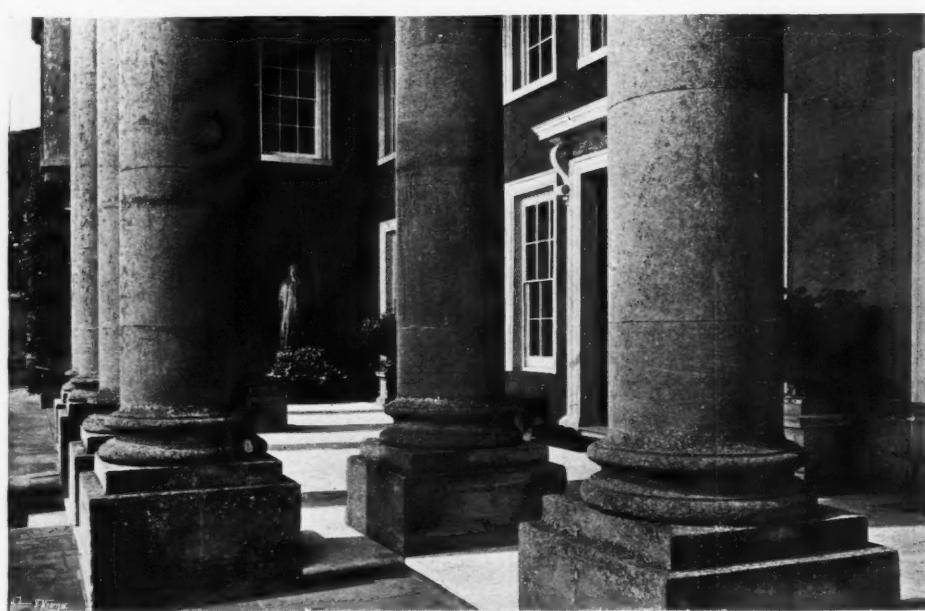
"COUNTRY LIFE."

taken his idea from a picture by Nicholas Poussin, and to have been practically assisted by one Mr. Josah Lane, the whole being finished under the direction of the first Marquess. "Thus completed, and daily improving in wildness and picturesque effect, it stands a flattering monument of the taste and judgment of all who were concerned in its construction." Landscape art was sometimes taken as a suggestion for garden design, though Whately, in his "Observations on Modern Gardening" (1801), says that gardening is "as superior to landskip-painting as a reality to a representation."

Our concern being with the gardens of Bowood, we must forego the pleasure of writing anything descriptive of the magnificent house or its contents. Many of the first Marquess's art and literary treasures were sold and scattered by his son and successor, his valuable papers being secured, however, for national uses, and they now form the well-known Lansdowne MSS. in the British Museum. The third Marquess, however, half-brother of the last-named, regenerated the attractions of the place, being a liberal patron of art and literature, like his father, and he exercised a wise discretion in bringing together a large part of the splendid collection of pictures and statuary which are one of the great attractions of

Bowood. To him also the gardens owe very much, for he enlarged and embellished them, and the noble Italian garden is largely the work of his hand. As a young man he made the grand tour, in company with M. Etienne Dumont, an intimate friend of Mirabeau, and though upon his return he immediately plunged into politics, and became Chancellor of the Exchequer at twenty-five in the Ministry of "All the Talents," he never lost his love for every manifestation of art, and Bowood, in his time, became again the resort of many men distinguished in literature and science.

The ornamental grounds cover some seventy acres, while the park comprises about 1,000 acres of wood and open land. Enthusiastic—and justly enthusiastic—Britton notes three distinguishing classes into which the "agreeable objects of Nature" at Bowood may be divided—the sublime, the picturesque, and the beautiful. Sublimity he found in the extensive prospects, the rich wood, and the massive rock worn into furrows by the rush of falling waters, the details of landscape being "absorbed in the striking grandeur of the surrounding scenery"; picturesqueness he applauds in the broad lake, and its artless, wild, and broken accompaniments; and beauty he rightly discerns in the glory of the lawns and the



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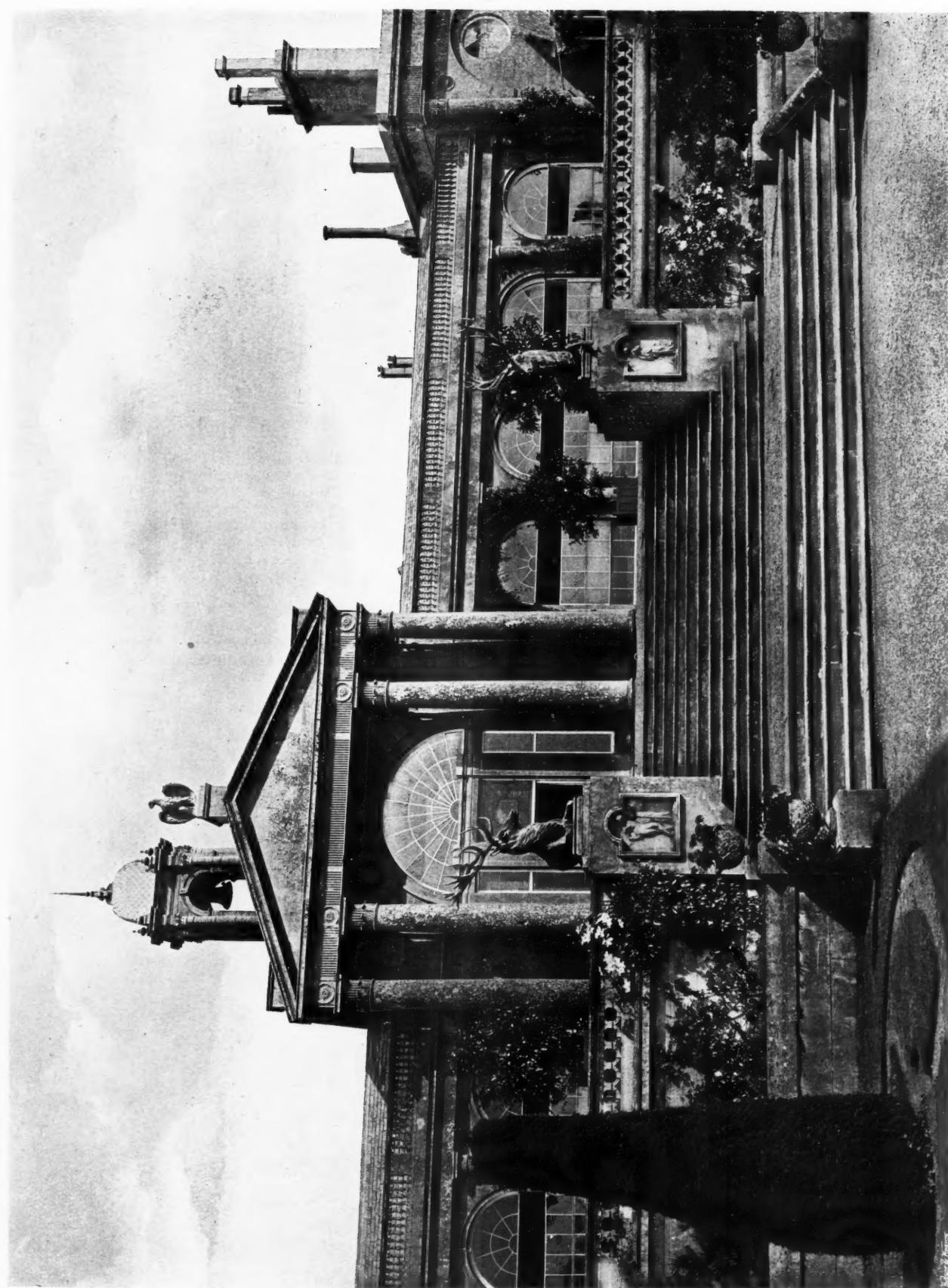
THE ENTRANCE TO BOWOOD HOUSE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Jan. 28th, 1905.]

COUNTRY LIFE.

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THE ORANGERY STAIRCASE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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pleasure-grounds, which we are to describe.

The park through which we approach these latter is a green and bowery wilderness, where great trees of the patrician forest, tall and stately, cast their wide expanse of shade, standing in groups like umbrageous islands in the far-spread green of the grass, or clothing in woodland extent the steep slopes of the hills. Their lofty crests remind us of the Royal forest of Pewisham, in whose ancient greenwood the Earl of Shelburne made his home. No level expanse, indeed, is this, but one rich in hill and dale, intersected by green roads, and possessing those magnificent woods and sheltered groves, streams, and the noble lake and cascade which add so much to the grace and variety of the domain. The approach from Chippenham is superb, by the picturesque hamlet of Derry Hill, sweetly embowered, and through the arched gateway which gives admittance, flanked by a tower of Barry's design. There is a drive of some two miles to the mansion, and, as we go, new beauties of the park are revealed as the hills and hollows come into sight, luxuriant in their verdure, and there are occasional glimpses of the tall Lansdowne column, standing on the lofty height of Cherhill Downs, and the white horse on the slope. Not less attractive is the approach from Calne, which brings the privileged visitor by the famous gardens of Bowood.

And now, as we near the house, we notice its stately, classic forms, and discern how well it harmonises with its surroundings,



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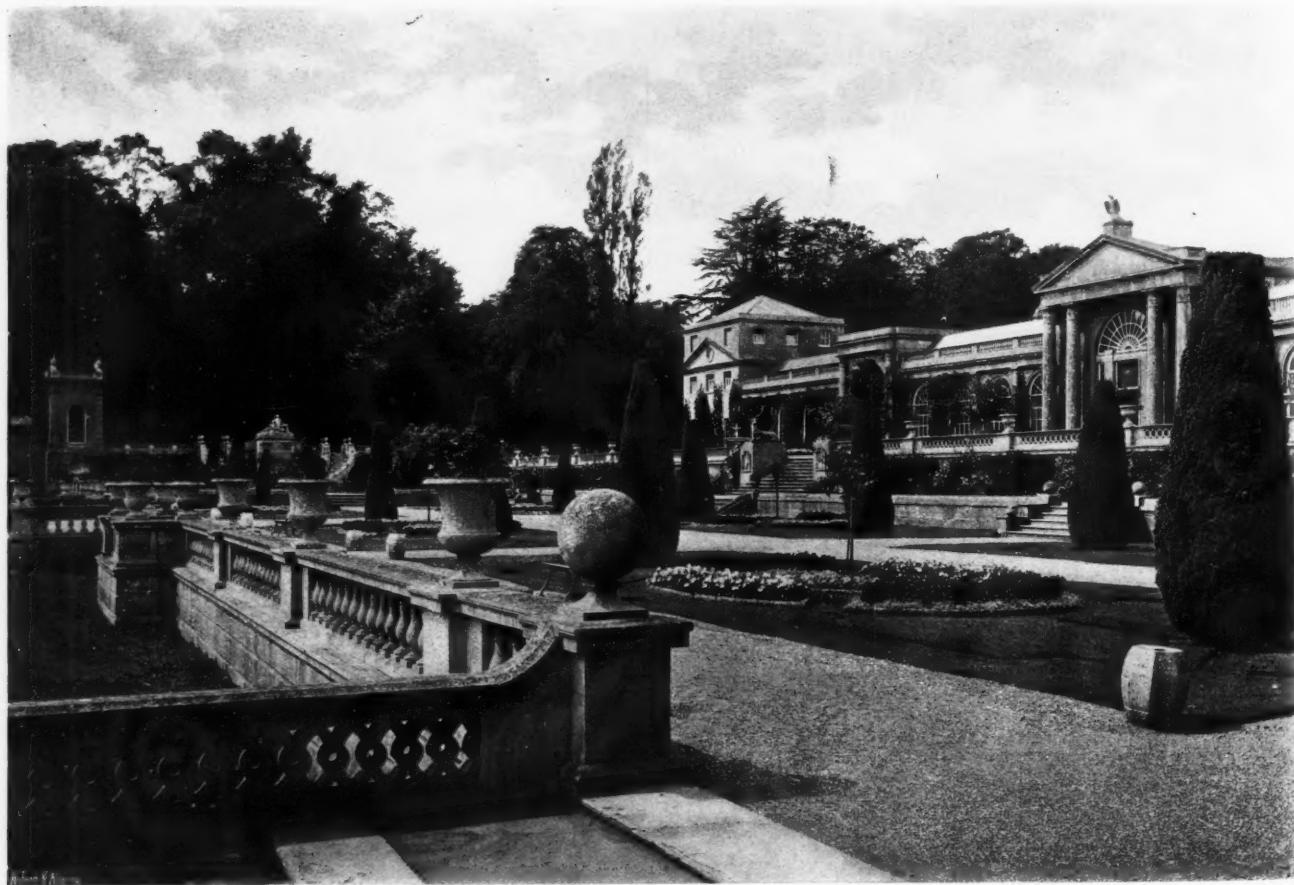
THE EAST TERRACES.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

and how happy is the effect of colour in the garden glory and the beautiful tints of the stone. The great Doric portico on the south, the sculptured cornices and pediments, the cresting balustrades and the urns, the variety and dignity of the structure, are very impressive. We know that within are magnificent apartments of extraordinary beauty, and that the house is a treasure-place of art. Not only does Bowood possess a great series of works by the greatest masters—Raphael, Titian, Sebastian del

Piombo, Domenechino, Giorgione, Salvator Rosa, Rembrandt, Teniers, Van der Velde, Hobbema, Wouvermans, Murillo, Velasquez, Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, and many more; but in many cases these are masterpieces of rare artistic interest, value, and beauty. But our concern is with the exterior, and mainly with the lovely gardens that adorn the house; and what a region of beauty do we survey when we stand on the terrace before that conservatory wing, designed in imitation of a wing of the palace of Diocletian!

The gardens are classic, as we might expect, when they grace such a mansion. They have their kindred and originals in sunny Italy, where, in papal or ducal gardens, we rise from terrace to terrace, shadowed by ilexes and the tall spires of ancient cypresses. They have their kindred also in the gay gardens of old France. In a classic garden like that at Bowood we are not called upon to make a choice between the masterpiece of gardening and the work of Nature. We have both—the master-



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THE SOUTH CORNER OF THE HOUSE.

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THE ITALIAN GARDEN.

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"COUNTRY LIFE."

piece in the Italian pleasure and in the formal terraces, or by the Neptune fountain, the work of Nature in the park and the woods. As to the straight lines and sentinel yews of the classic garden, we will not share in the gentle railing of Alfred de Musset, speaking of a more famous example :

" O dieux ! O bergers ! O rocaillés !  
Vieux satyres, Termes grognans,  
Vieux petits ifs en rang d'oignons,  
O bassins, quinconces, charmilles,  
Boulingrins pleins de majesté,  
Où, les dimanches, tout l'été  
Bâillent tant d'honnêtes familles ! "

We will say of the garden, illustrated so well, what Théophile Gautier says of Versailles, that it is quite the garden for the house, that there is marvellous harmony in its regular forms, that the result is an impression of grandeur, symmetry, and beauty not to be resisted—"the supreme formula of a complete art, and the highest expression of a civilisation completely developed."

Let us first visit descriptively the noble Italian Garden on the west side of the house, where the grand conservatory and orangery wing extends along the upper terrace, being full of the richest fruit and flowers. Here on the terrace are two fountains with basins, and the area is laid out with stone-edged flower-beds geometrically arranged, all gay with beautiful things, and tall, well-clipped yews are there to give distinction and relief. This upper terrace is margined by a beautiful balustrade, adorned with radiant vases of flowers, and there is a fine descent to the next level by a stairway between two noble bronze stags, which are well seen in one of the pictures. Along this terrace wall clematis and roses cluster, and below it is a long walk, from which we descend by short flights of steps to the principal level of the garden. From the west windows of the house an enchanting

prospect opens lengthwise over this beautiful spot, which is bright with flowers in well-arranged beds set in the grass spaces between the broad walks, and, again, there are tall yews shaped as truncated cones to give point and character to the prospect. Parallel with the orangery, a long balustrade forms the outer margin of the garden, with beautiful flower vases at intervals upon it, and fine descents to the green spaces of the park. Then, facing the house, at the other end of the garden, where the ground rises, is an ascent to a low terrace, and then by the double segmental stairway, where Neptune and the nymph are raised high upon their pedestal, we ascend to a transverse terrace, overshadowed by a magnificent bank of most beautiful trees.

The garden architecture is superb, and nowhere better than in this stairway of the Neptune fountain, which is worthy of the Villa d'Este or of any garden of Italy. The cool and beautiful stonework is superbly fashioned, and the terrace wall is flushed and adorned with the rich beauty of many fair garden denizens, while the double stairway leads up to the terraced height under the trees, whence we look out over the whole garden, to the classic beauties of the stately house and the landscape beauties of the park. How great these beauties are we may see again as well as the admirable character of the balustrading and the vases, in another lovely representation of the park as viewed from the garden.

We might expatiate at length upon the charms and special features of these splendid gardens of Bowood. They are all satisfying to the architectural and garden sense. Notice also the beauty of the east terraces, where the same character is preserved, and the secluded attractions of Lady Lansdowne's garden, all enclosed, with the sundial in the midst of the verdant lawn, which is interspersed with beautiful flower-beds, and gay flower borders along its margin. More we shall not say. The pictures which accompany this article are admirably successful in interpreting the garden character.

## WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

### HUNGER AND QUARRELS.

**T**IMES of hunger seem to bring out all the bad qualities of the birds. When the ground is frozen and the ploughs are idle, the gull robs the plover, and the rook tries to steal from both. It is then that the hoodie crow apes the bird of prey, and swoops at a passing fieldfare, or deliberately tries to hunt down a dunlin.

In the hardest weather, too, the missel-thrush is noisiest, hunting hungry wan levers from his private store of berries; and round the bird-table it almost becomes the rule that no bird shall allow any other of his own kind with a fraction less of fighting-weight to feed in his presence. And the differences between the tits are so infinitesimal that one never ceases to wonder at the instantaneous accuracy with which one of these feathered mites "sizes up" a new arrival, and either dashes at him like a bullet, or bolts incontinently. And this is a nice estimation of each other's capabilities in the fighting line, because the one that assumes the offensive never finds the other staying to receive him, and the one that takes to flight never does it half a second too soon.

### FIGHTING FOR PLACES.

With this state of promiscuous strife pervading all birddom in hard weather, one gets an interesting insight into the precedence of different kinds and both sexes of birds. The robin, for instance, can—and does—always hunt off the hedge-sparrow; but there is a great difference between the abject terror of the hen hedge-sparrow when any robin approaches, and the reluctance with which the male hedge-sparrow pretends to withdraw, but constantly reappears from the other side of the bush when his pursuer is only a female robin. So, too, a male robin very nearly dares to try conclusions with a female house-sparrow; indeed, when the bone of contention is placed on a hanging table, when the sparrow is manifestly nervous, the robin will sometimes actually dash at her and drive her off. There are some blue tits, too—presumably the females—against whom the male robin will present a bold front, though not quite carrying it to the length of combat, while he retires before others at sight.

### THE WEAKER SEX.

A male starling will drive away a hen blackbird from the food, but no starling dares to remain when the yellow-billed cock blackbird is on the rampage. Song-thrushes are also so near to the fighting-weight of blackbirds that it is often only a question of sex whether the thrush remains to brave it out or not when the blackbird arrives. Even the cock house-sparrow will resist the hen blackbird, though she will get the upper hand after a skirmish or two; but he will not think of stopping to argue the question of possession of a crust with her husband. But neither blackbird, nor thrush, nor starling thinks of resisting an angry missel-thrush, male or female.

### CHANGED RELATIONS.

This fighting order of precedence at meals in winter is the more interesting because it differs so markedly from the relations subsisting between the same birds at other times. In late summer, for instance, most of the old starlings seem to make the best part of their living by following the young missel-thrushes about and robbing them of the chafer grubs which they find; and there does not seem to be any particular period when starling and missel-thrush mutually discover that their positions ought to be reversed. There is no time when you see young missel-thrushes resisting the starlings and teaching them a lesson. Yet somehow the lesson is very completely learned,

for, whenever autumn passes into winter, you find that the missel-thrush's turn has come to play the bully.

### PEEWITS AND GULLS.

More intelligible are the changed relations which subsist, according to season, between the peewits and the gulls. All through the autumn and winter the peewits are the unresisting victims of the black-headed gulls, which in hard weather and on Sundays, when no ploughing is in progress, seem to depend mainly for food ashore upon the superior ability of the plovers in finding it. Sometimes, when the weather is very severe, the larger herring-gulls will browbeat the black-headed gulls and take the loot for themselves, though, as a rule, the herring-gull prefers to rob the curlews, if he robs anyone, playing exactly the same part towards that long-billed prober of the soil that his smaller cousin enacts towards the plover. Thus the last-named bird would seem to be separated by two whole grades of fighting-weight from the herring-gull, and no doubt if a herring-gull could catch a disabled peewit he would eat him. Yet when the peewit has eggs in his nest, and the herring-gulls are loafing around looking for eggs, their positions are reversed. Then the peewit becomes the assailant, and with his brilliant swoops and dashes will, single-handed, drive off a whole party of herring-gulls.

### THE DOMINEERING SPARROW.

Another familiar example of the weaker bird becoming the stronger is provided by the house-sparrow. In winter, as we have seen, starling, blackbird, and thrush will all drive the sparrow from the bird-table if they have a mind to; yet often in spring you will see thrush or blackbird dashing in and out and round the shrubbery where it has its nest hotly pursued by a sparrow, and all day long you may hear the harsh screeching of a fugitive starling which some sparrow is hounding from the gable where they are both nesting. In the same way a sparrow will chase a pigeon—and even a swift-flying homer has to put on its best pace to escape from being tweaked behind by its pigmy assailant—although at the feeding-place a little collared dove easily clears off the sparrows, yielding its place in turn without dispute to any pigeon. Here, again, we have a case of a bird becoming successfully valiant against others which are two whole tiers above it in fighting capacity.

### WEAK versus STRONG.

The explanation is, of course, that any bird which chooses to pursue another must have the best of it, because a bird has a beak only at one end, and its tail end is practically defenceless. Sometimes, indeed, a pursued starling manages to check in flight, and with beak and claws so menace its pursuer that the latter is glad to swerve aside and abandon the chase. A thrush, too, will not hesitate to alight suddenly upon a convenient bough, when the sparrow has to sheer off. But, as a rule, the pursuit continues until the sparrow's sense of importance is completely satisfied, which may not be sometimes until a luckless pigeon has made the wide circuit of the premises half-a-dozen times, with the sparrow never more than a foot or so behind it; and there are some smaller and much weaker birds than the sparrow—the willow-wren, for instance—which similarly chase all sorts of birds—the sparrow included.

### AN INTERESTING QUESTION.

It would be very interesting to know exactly the reasons which make some birds so ready to annoy others. Although it is not necessary that they should gain any particular advantage in the struggle for existence by indulging

in the habit, we may be sure that it is, directly or indirectly, connected with some such advantage. Why should a willow wren sometimes hunt a sparrow up to its own water-pipe, subjecting it to the indignity of a final tweak in the very act of alighting? And why should the sparrow chase a starling from the entrance to its own nesting-place? That in these, as in all other cases, the

bigger bird submits to be hustled because the smaller seems to be in earnest is no doubt true, for it is a wise general rule of Nature that the stronger shall give way to the weaker when the latter is in earnest. But this does not explain why the weaker should be in earnest, or should appear to be so, when, so far as one can see, there is nothing at stake. E. K. R.

## NETTING WILDFOWL ON THE FENS.

**T**HE wild mallard is a gallant gentleman. Clad in his coat of brilliant hues, he selects the lady of his affections, and only after a prolonged and ardent courtship does he settle down to the duties of matrimony, during which period he still keeps faithful watch and ward over the lady to whom he has vowed his constancy. She, on her part, is a most careful and attentive matron, and, as the period arrives for the hatching off of her eggs, she is careful to cover them with a warm coverlet of down, plucked from her breast, every time she leaves her nest for bathing and refreshment. And before she does so her mate sweeps wide circles in the sky to see that no danger is lurking near. About the middle of May the mallard doffs his brilliant plumage, and assumes the more sober clothing worn by his consort. He becomes feeble and listless, and it is not until October days have dawned that he resumes his vigour and is ready to confront the many dangers that await him at the hands of the shooter, the decoy-keeper, and the perhaps more deadly snare of the flight-net.

From time immemorial the Fen district has been the home and the haunt of the wildfowl, and still these great fens have a wild beauty of their own, for from the sea, to which their sweeping marge slope, they borrow something of its sense of freedom and of boundless range. Down from the feet of the wolds, the broad, green flats melt into the limitless horizon of the ocean, while along its edges lie the dark green alder-beds, long lines of reeds shimmering russet and golden in the October light; and here, too, are the inlet river reaches covered with countless flocks of tow. In former years flight-nets were extensively used for snaring wild duck and wildfowl of all descriptions, but drainage, reclamation of waste grounds, and improved systems of cultivation have to a considerable extent affected the flights and feeding grounds of the wild birds; and on that account some of the old flight-net grounds have been abandoned, as the birds no longer come to the nets in sufficient numbers to make the business pay. Almost the best district remaining in which to watch the operation of "flight-netting" is that stretch of shore and mud-flat running along the old Roman bank



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SETTING THE NETS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

between Wainfleet, Friskney, and Hurn End; a little further north, where the sand predominates, the shallow waters are full of shrimps, which are caught in countless numbers by the simple process of dragging a net along behind a cart; but below Skegness the mud begins, and the Friskney Flat itself is about three miles wide and nearly ten miles in length. When summer is gone, and autumn days have come, huge flocks of birds, principally waders, come flying South from the frozen solitudes of the North, and swoop down upon this vast expanse of mud for food and rest; as the days shorten, and the cold strengthens, they are followed by wild duck, widgeon, teal, and curlew, and then begin the busy days of the flight-netter. His *modus operandi* is a very simple one, but the life he leads is trying to a degree to any but the strongest constitution; he must be out and about in the chilliest hours of a winter morning, and find his way over the mud-flats in the darkest hours, and the flats themselves are beset with dangers to the feet of the unwary, even the flight-netter himself, who knows every swirling turn of the tide, and every shimmer on the surface of the treacherous quicksand, plants, bushes, and poles in the muddy surface to guide him on his way. The flight-nets themselves are made in lengths, each length being about 36 yards long by 6 ft. in width, or rather height, when set up; they are made of fine dark-coloured twine, with a 6 in. mesh, and along the top and bottom of each length runs a thin, strong cord, which serves to attach it to sufficiently stout ash-poles, which are placed about 37 yards apart. These poles are some 10 ft. in length, about 3 ft. is driven into the mud, leaving 7 ft. above the ground, and to these are attached the nets, which are allowed to hang quite loosely, so that, if struck about the centre, they form a sort of bag or pouch. The extent of the net evidently depends upon the number of lengths of which it is made up; but it may be taken that the longest net in use does not exceed twelve lengths, or about 400 yards. The outlay required for the nets themselves, the poles to which they are attached, and the various cords and twine necessary for repairs, is a somewhat serious item in the expenditure of the owner of the flight-nets. But, with a little care and supervision, the whole apparatus will last for years;



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USELESS STRUGGLING.

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though, when it is remembered that the nets are set from September 1st to March 1st, and that they are exposed to the fury of the driving storms which sweep in upon the low-lying coast during the very worst part of the winter, it will be readily understood that the materials of which they are made must be of the very best. It is almost needless to point out that accurate knowledge of the line of flight of the wildfowl is absolutely necessary to ensure the proper placing of the nets, which, by the way, are always set at right angles to the sea-line. Dark, stormy nights, with wild, broken weather and strong easterly or north-easterly winds, bring a harvest to the flight-nets; for the wildfowl are very keen of sight, and extremely suspicious of anything that has the appearance of a snare, and, perhaps, on that account very few are caught on calm, still moonlight nights. It is rather a moot point whether the birds actually fly into the net or whether they strike it on rising from their feeding ground; both cases probably occur, for many birds are entangled in the meshes of the nets almost at the top, and anyone who has watched wildfowl swooping down to settle on their food will readily understand that somewhere between 5ft. and 6ft. from the ground would be just about the height at which they would be liable to strike

be a cold one. Big sea boots are absolutely indispensable, and the warmest of clothing a necessity. For some reason



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DROWNED BY THE TIDE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

or other, a cold, drizzling rain seems to be always falling on such a morning, and the cold seems to eat into the bones of the unaccustomed stranger. However, one can help Bray to carry some of the bags which are destined to receive his victims, and, by the time one has fought one's way against the biting east wind, and splashed and tumbled half into and half over the countless creeks that intersect the muddy ooze, some vestige of warmth returns, and one is ready to view the nets with interest. There they are, looming up in the grey mist, and, as one gets nearer, the various dark blots within their meshes take the shape and form of birds. Many of them are still living and struggling, and, if possible, they are carefully extracted from the meshes, and consigned to separate bags, to be afterwards turned out into an enclosure at the back of Bray's house, and sorted out for sale. There is quite a ready demand for the different sorts of gulls, plovers, oyster-catchers, and other birds for private aviaries, zoological collections, and garden pets. Then the birds which are already dead, or so hopelessly injured that a happy release from suffering is their kindest



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DISENTANGLING THE MESHES,

'COUNTRY LIFE.'

late, are gathered together and sorted out for sale. There are a few ducks—some seven couples—several gulls, some dunlins, a couple of oyster-catchers, a short-eared owl, whose greedy pursuit of some small bird has probably led him into the fatal meshes, several of the waders, and a nightjar; though how or why the latter bird found himself in such a plight is somewhat of a puzzle. The biggest haul that Bray ever made was after a prolonged easterly gale, accompanied by a biting frost, and on that occasion his bag numbered not far short of 200 head. Fully exposed to the fury of the wind is the low-lying coast along the old Roman embankment, so low indeed, and so flat, that a facetious American, who was not above learning the art of flight-netting, plaintively asked for a brick to stand upon, that he might have a look at the country around.

Apart from the damage done to the snares of the flight-netter by the wind and waves, terrible rents are sometimes made in the nets when a big bunch of ducks happens to strike them when well on the wing, and many of the larger birds—such as cormorants, gannets, or a great blustering goose—break clean through the thin twine of which the nets are made; in fact, anyone who has ever witnessed the meteor-like descent of a gannet when, with closed wings and an ever-increasing impetus, he swoops down from his lofty station in the clouds upon the fish his keen eyesight has marked out for a prey, will readily understand that the slight fabric of the flight-fowler's net would oppose but a feeble obstacle to the impetus of his descent. In some places traps are set for gannet, consisting simply of a herring, or other fish, attached to a stout board, which is weighted in such a manner that it floats just below the surface. The gannet sees the bait, and hurls himself down with such velocity that his neck is broken by the force with which he strikes the board.

In olden days the lands which lay along the foot of the wolds were called the horse fens, and many a horse of

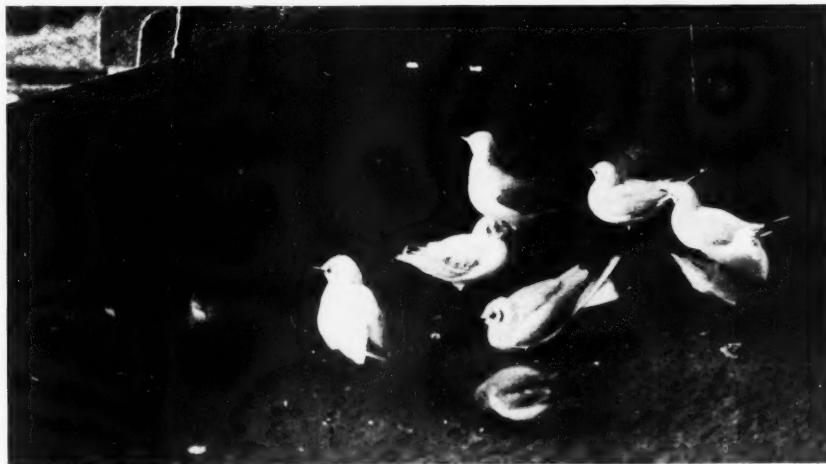
courage and hardy constitution was bred in the district. It is even recorded that the war-horse of the famous Saxon leader, Hereward the Wake, was bred in the Fens. Many traces of the old horse-loving, horse-breeding spirit still remain amongst the inhabitants, and young Bray, who may be seen assisting his father at the flight-nets, has in some way or other managed to become the owner of a rare old hunting mare, and from her he has bred and reared a capital free-going grey two year old, which he has already broken to harness.

The old fenland, and the quaint hamlets and villages along the coast—if such a name can be applied to the place where there is, practically speaking, no dividing line 'twixt land and sea—are full of interest. Many are the tales of ancient lore and fanciful mythology that have drifted down through the ages, concerning the were-wolves, will-o'-the-wisps, witches, and evil spirits which haunted the dark, unwholesome woods and swamps in the

long-past days of the men of Danelagh, and it is not difficult to conceive the source from which many of these old superstitions must have sprung. If one stands in the gathering gloom of a winter's night on the edge of the Friskney Flats when the tide is surging in with the hard east wind behind it, out of the darkness comes the throbbing beat of unseen wings, mysterious voices call through the wind, and strange weird screams are heard in the breaking gusts of the gale. They are but the voices of the feathered travellers through the night; but it does not require much imagination to know whence came the strange old legend of the "seven fatal whistlers."

"Honk, honk, honk," comes the steady call of the flighting goose, and perhaps the strange throbbing whistle of the wild swan, which, in the master hands of Wagner, pervades the story of Lohengrin.

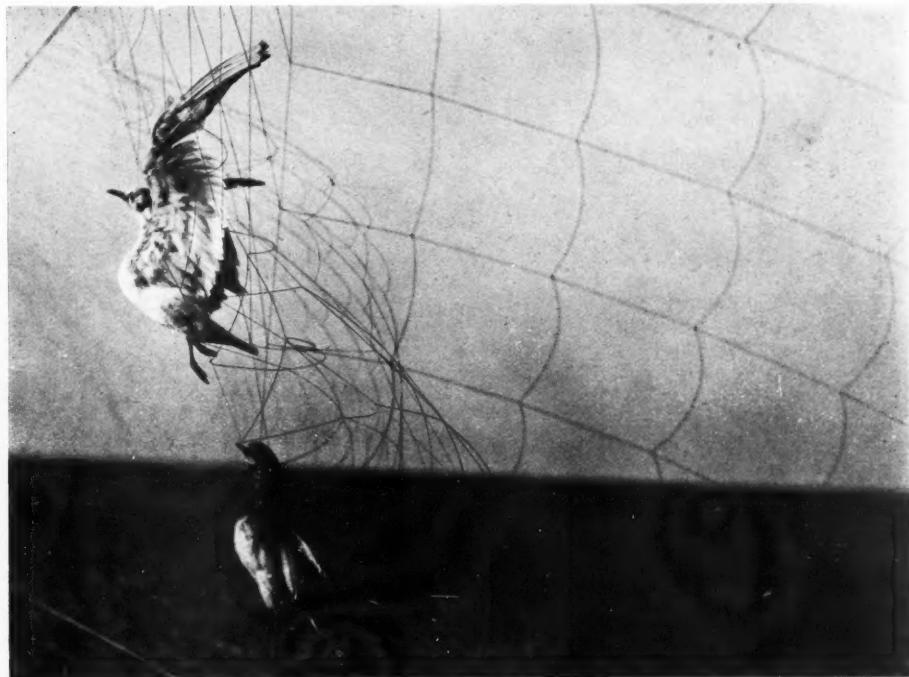
T. H. B.



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IN THE PEN.

'COUNTRY LIFE.'



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THE PREY OF THE FOWLER.

'COUNTRY LIFE.'

## FROM THE FARMS.

### WHEAT AND TITHE.

**T**HE fluctuation of the tithe rent charge in England has been very erratic since commutation took place in 1837. During the most prosperous years of agriculture, the value of the nominal £100 rose to the maximum of £112 7s. 5½d. That was in 1877. From that time onwards it kept gradually decreasing, till in 1900 it had fallen to £66 10s. 9½d. That was the worst time for the rural parson, as anyone may very well see for himself who recognises that a clergyman in charge is bound to fix his expenditure as far as possible in accordance with the income that he ought to receive; but if a man for every nominal £100 only gets £66, it is no wonder if the balance is on the wrong side at the end of the year, and very much distress was caused by the extraordinary fall. After 1900, however, the current set in the opposite direction, and the tithe rent charge then began to move slowly upward, until in 1903 the value of the nominal £100 was £69 19s. 6d. The return for 1904, however, shows a reduction in the septennial average of 7s. 5½d. We do not think that this marks more than an accidental vicissitude, since last year the average price of wheat was 28s. 4d. per quarter; that is to say, rs. 7d. more than in 1903, and the highest since 1898. We may therefore regard the slight depression in the tithe rent charge for 1904 as being due to a temporary fall in price after the conclusion of the war in South Africa. The movement upward, having once begun, is in every way likely to continue.

### SLUGS AND SNAILS.

A very valuable report on these small creatures, showing which are and which are not injurious, has just been printed in the January number of the Journal of the Board of Agriculture. In general terms we are told that the injurious snails belong to the family Helicidae and to the genus *Helix*. Both slugs and snails are crepuscular in their habits, or nocturnal, but there are many that feed ravenously in daylight if the weather is damp. While the sun is shining snails crawl for shelter under leaves, stones,



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STOPPED BY THE FROST.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

and moss, while the slug, as a rule, goes to ground for protection. Snails are fond of green vegetation, but some slugs do not like green plants, and feed almost exclusively on non-chlorophyllaceous matter, some preferring dried vegetable products, and others living on dead animal substances. The following list of destructive British slugs has been compiled: First, the grey field slug (*Limax agrestis*). This is a very common slug in nearly every country of Europe, and is very prolific. A single specimen is able to lay about 500 eggs in a year. As a rule, these eggs are deposited in batches of from six to fifteen, but separate from one another. The breeding season lasts from May till December, during which period the eggs may be found either in the ground, under stones, or amongst moss. When first hatched the young are about a tenth of an inch long, and are then very pale and soft. These slugs prefer to feed above ground, and devour vegetation of all sorts, often causing wholesale destruction to wheat, clover,



W. Reid.

READY FOR WORK.

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turnips, cabbage, and rape, while almost all garden plants, both culinary and ornamental, are attacked by them. Second, the black slug, or mottled slug, is one of the largest of the family, often reaching 7in. in length. This slug lives for several years, and feeds largely upon animal matter, though Mr. Theobald declares that he has seen them eating seedling plants. Three, the household slug, is commonly met with in cellars, sculleries, and houses, but it often occurs in damp woods and gardens. The writer says, "one was observed to crawl up 20ft. of wall in the night and enter a room, where it left behind a trail of slime 30ft. long on the carpet, and was found in the morning still crawling up to a window." It feeds upon meal and flour amongst other things, and is particularly partial to cream, while not averse to eating the fungi that grow on beer drippings in cellars. Occasionally, too, it eats wine-corks, and does not turn up its nose at bread, cooked vegetables, or meat. Four, the root-eating slug, is the one which does most harm to bulb roots, and is particularly fond of potatoes and carrots. Of five, the large black slug, the writer says that it "will feed upon almost anything—the choicest garden vegetables and flowers, coarser field crops, other slugs, various insect larvæ, earthworms, raw meat, and it has been known to devour newspapers and sand, and even soap. It is found in damp woods, along dykes, in gardens and hedges, but not so often in open fields." Six, the small Arion, is about 1½in. long and very variable in colour. It does a great deal of harm, and occurs in gardens and fields, hiding under stones and fallen leaves wherever it is damp. Seven, the earthworm-eating snail-slug, reaches 3in. in length, and is found in gardens and at the bottom of flower-pots and boxes and heaps of leaf-mould. This and two other species of slug hunt the earthworms, and also feed on snails and slugs. They do no harm to vegetation, and should be protected and not destroyed.

#### WASHING FRUIT TREES.

In olden times it was customary in early days of spring to hold a great meeting in the orchard, when large heaps of chaff were burnt to make a thick smoke and the orchard-owner and his people wished good luck to the trees, the idea being to kill the injurious insects that at this season find harbourage in the bark and crevices and later on destroy both leaves and blossoms. Science eventually found an effectual substitute in the shape of grease-bands, that were tied round the boles of the trees to prevent the wingless females from crawling upwards. But this system again has been generally abandoned, and the best check upon insects is generally considered to be washing in February. A mixture recommended by a well-known expert, Mr. Gowing, consists of 1lb. caustic soda, 1lb. crude potash, ¼lb. soft soap, and 10gal. of water. If a little whiting be added it will serve to show where the wash has actually been applied, and so the whole of the trees may be effectually dressed. In well-appointed orchards all this is done as a matter of course, but there are many where no precautions at all are taken. Yet it is undeniable that the apple might be made a source of considerable profit to the farmer, since not only is the demand for cider a growing one, but the apple itself comes more and more into favour as an article of diet.

#### A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

**T**O what extent any particular literary genius has been influenced by place associations it is always difficult to say, though if the various writers in the series of which the latest is *The Thackeray Country*, by Lewis Melville (Black), had kept this speculation in view, they would to our mind have been at once more instructive and more interesting. To take the list of writers, there can be no doubt but that the character of Scott's romance was largely influenced by the fact of his having been born and bred in the romantic Borderland, where every river has its traditions, every field its legend of "feud and fray," every old tower its tales of wild adventure. Therefore a study of the Scott country conducted on sound principles would illuminate the whole character and history of Scott. It is the same with Burns. The Lugar, the Ayr, and the other West Country streams ripple through his verse even as they ripple over the wild West Country. When we come to the Dickens country the theory does not seem to apply, as a man born in London has no country at all, and, of course, such books as "The Hardy Country," "The Cromwell Country," "The Ingoldsby Country," and even "The Blackmore Country," are studies on a lower and more imitative plane. *The Thackeray Country*, as far as scientific biography is concerned, is altogether beyond the mark. It has no significance whatever. A man born in India and sent through the regulation schools and colleges in Great Britain has had no poetic home associations to influence his life in the way, for example, that Somersby influenced Lord Tennyson or the Dumfries country shaped the genius of Burns. But, still, there is a certain interest apart from all this in considering the land of Thackeray. Let us, as an example, take his association with the Temple—the dear, dark,

dim, dusty Temple, as it has been, and we verily believe ever will be, to those "expatriated spiritualisms" who from that refuge deliver their souls to the town. What a picture of dear familiar faces rises up with the very mention of King's Bench Walk, Mitre Court, Pump Court, Hare Court, Brick Court, and all the rest of them! In "Pendennis" he has graphically enough painted the lives of its inhabitants. The young lawyers, "after reading pretty hard in the morning, and I fear not law merely, but politics and general history and literature, which were as necessary for the advancement and instruction of a young man as mere dry law, after applying with tolerable assiduity to letters, to reviews, to elemental books of law, and above all to the newspapers until the hour of dinner was drawing nigh, would sally out upon the town with great spirits and appetite, and bent upon enjoying a merry night as they had passed a pleasant forenoon." So it was in the day of Thackeray, so it is now. There is strenuous and yet joyous labour spent on books and papers in the morning, and then when evening comes the still more strenuous joy of dining amid chaff and laughter at restaurant or hostelry. After leaving Hare Court Thackeray went to Paris, and on returning took chambers at 2, Brick Court, where Oliver Goldsmith once lived. He tells us how he had been in the rooms where Oliver lived, and passed up the staircase on which the footsteps of Johnson and Burke and Reynolds were familiar. Here it was that Dr. Johnson found Goldsmith in deadly fear of duns, with "The Vicar of Wakefield" ready, but unconscious of its value. Later still Thackeray took rooms at 10, Crown Office Row, celebrated by the gentle "Elia." Is the old Mitre, near Mitre Court, the supper-house at which Boswell sucked in the wisdom of Johnson? True it is, as Lamb said, that in these winter days you can still from Mitre Court—or, to speak more properly, Mitre Court Buildings, since Mitre Court is outside the precincts of the Temple—see the terra-cotta sails of barges and the black funnels of steamers moving up and down on the bosom of Father Thames, can even on sunny days catch a glimpse of the radiant water. It is the same now as then; the rest of London may have changed, but Bohemia endureth for ever. There is perhaps a greater proportion of respectability in letters, yet the irresponsible lineage man, the brilliant but prodigal novelist, the contributor to this and that or the other, who has every fine attribute except that of self-control, may be seen hobnobbing in hostgeries of various sizes and descriptions lying within easy reach of the classic precincts. As part of Thackeray's life, however, this interest is quite different from that which the quiet Lincolnshire scenery round his father's rectory exercised on young Tennyson, who grew up as refined as the white flowers that come in the wood, and as musical as the brook that purl over the ribbed sand at the foot of the rectory field. Thackeray was beyond the age to be personally influenced by his surroundings, but the Temple and its people afforded material for his pen. As long as George Warrington lives, and "Pendennis" is read as it should be, the Temple will ever be associated with the memory of Thackeray as closely as it is with that of Charles Lamb and Goldsmith, Johnson and Sir Joshua. Besides, Fleet Street is at the gate, with its Cheshire Cheese, its herd of nameless *littérateurs*, and its reckless cleverness. For the rest, it is something of a deficiency in the writing of Thackeray that he has no great power of describing country scenes and country characters. It is curious and noteworthy that in this respect Thackeray is an exception to a general rule. Nearly all great literary Englishmen have been enthusiastic lovers of the country. We find this characteristic in Chaucer, "the well of English undefiled," whose fields and gardens are described with a simplicity and beauty that never have been surpassed. No truer note of criticism was ever sounded than that of John Milton when he sang of "Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child, Warbling his native wood notes wild." Nearly all the most beautiful passages of our greatest poet refer to stars and flowers, to moonlight and sunshine, and spring and winter. His company of country gentlemen is one that, barring certain externals, such as speech and clothes, which belonged to the day of Elizabeth, might be collected from the English shires to-day. His knowledge of sport, of horses, of hawk, and of hound was not excelled even by those who were specialists. Milton himself is never more beautiful than when he is telling of the moon riding in the sky, or saying, "then came still evening on"; and if we take the novelists we shall find all the best of them revelling in country life. In Fielding it is the country squire, the country parson, the gamekeeper, and the other rustics that count. In fact, he was pre-eminently a country gentleman himself. So it was with Scott, who never seems perfectly at home except in the open air. If we were to take the three greatest novelists in the English language the third would certainly be Jane Austen, and she was a rustic of the rustics, never so happy as when portraying scenes of country life. As to our other poets, the very names suggest visions of mountain, lake, river, and sea. Wordsworth, Burns, Shelley, Tennyson—not one is of the town. How different is it with Thackeray! His theme was that of all great writers—human nature, and his scenes are pictures from its drama, its



J. M. Whitehead.

THE WITCH TREE.

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pathos, its ludicrousness; but how seldom have they any natural background. Cities he knew and streets and chambers, taverns and clubs, dancing saloons and gardens, in fact, all places where men do congregate; but the simple natural man, the pure peasant, he knew nothing of, or, at any rate, never attempted to delineate. There is an old Eastern proverb which says that no poet is a true poet unless he sings of moonshine and flowers. Thackeray never did this, but we do not think the reason lay in any incapacity. It was simply that the country of his childhood consisted of mixed scenes from various towns. They had no associations for him. There was no natural beauty in them for memory and sentiment to linger over, and hence they find no place in those books of his, which display nearly every other quality of a great writer except his love of Nature.

## ULLABIES.

VERY little has been said or written about the lullaby, yet of all the forms of lyric verse it is at once the simplest and the most charming. Indeed, it may very well be that in the lullaby we have the origin of all national music, if not of language itself. In the days before there was such a thing as speech the primitive mother had her child to hush to sleep. Night after night, as she laid herself down to rest she would be lulled to slumber by the sweetest of all music—the music of Nature. The gentle lapping of the tide on a low sandy beach, or the dull and monotonous thud of the breakers against a rocky shore, the chattering of the brook as it rippled over its stony bed, the sough of the wind in the pine trees, the rustle of the leaves stirred by a gentle summer breeze, would quite unconsciously exercise a soothing influence over her; and so, in quieting the child at her breast, it was but natural that she should croon to it an imitation of these sounds. The refrains of many of the Scotch and Irish lullabies sung to-day are made up merely of murmured inarticulate cadences having no meaning whatever, and in such words as "baloo-baloo," "shoheen-ho," "ho-ro," which occur again and again, it is easy to trace some resemblance to the sound of the wind in the trees and the splash of water. It is quite common in Scotland for a mother to sing the word "wheesh" over and over again as a lullaby to her child.

From a collection of inarticulate sounds, the lullaby

developed into a mere doggerel rhyme, which, as it was handed down from generation to generation, was added to and altered till it took a definite meaning. Whatever thought was uppermost in the mother's mind at the moment, whatever object her eyes rested on, was sufficient to provide a text for her song. Her audience, at any rate, was not likely to be critical. There is the old English lullaby, which we all know so well:

"Hush-a-by, baby, on the tree-top;  
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock;  
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,  
Down will come baby and cradle and all."

As we write it there rises up before us a typical English landscape, a stretch of green meadow, a tall elm tree, its great boughs swaying in the wind, and a little thatched cottage, from whose tiny windows the peasant mother looks out as she sings her child to sleep. We have the same theme in the Scottish cradle song :

"I've placed my cradle  
On yon holly top,  
And aye as the wind blew  
My cradle did rock.

And hush-a-by, baby,  
O ba-lilly-loo,  
And hee and ba-birdie  
My bonnie wee doo!"

This is part of a lullaby sent by Burns to Johnson's Museum, and in his time it was recognised as very ancient. From the refrain to it we may infer that the sight of the babe lying in her arms was not to this mother, at any rate, altogether a welcome one:

"Hee-o, wee-o, what wad I do wi' ye?  
Black's the life that I lead wi' ye.  
Owre mony o' ye, little for to gie ye,  
Hee-o, wee-o, what wad I do wi' ye?"

Indeed, no matter how fortunate are the circumstances of her child's birth, the mother's joy must always be tempered by sadness and fear. She dreams, it is true, as she watches her sleeping infant, of the worlds he will conquer, and the great deeds he will do; but knowing the road she herself has trod, knowing the want and misery and pain which await each of us in turn, is it any wonder that at times her heart is filled with

foreboding and dread? There is a world of pathos in the simple French nursery rhyme:

" Petit pied, petit pied rose  
De mon bien-aimé qui dort,  
Toi, qui vacilles encor  
Quand par terre je te pose :  
Alors que tu marcheras  
Petit pied, petit pied rose,  
Alors que tu marcheras  
Que sait ou tu passeras ! "

To our mind such lullabies as we have quoted here have a simplicity and charm all their own, for they owe their existence to what is the purest and most beautiful of all human passions—the love of a mother for her child. Yet there is still another stage in the development of the lullaby to be considered; that is to say, its treatment by the poet. George Wither, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Burns, Scott, and Tennyson have all given us examples of this kind of verse. But there is a very great difference between the mother's lullaby and the poet's lullaby. The former was a natural and spontaneous growth. It was primitive art in the truest sense of the words. But the poet's lullaby is an example of imitative art. A poet is not a mother. He can only try to imagine or divine what a mother would say or sing. Then, when he has done this, it is difficult for him to refrain from adding a touch of his own personality to the cradle song. The well-known lullaby which occurs in Sir Walter Scott's "Waverley" is an apt illustration of our meaning:

"O, hush thee, my babie, thy sire was a knight,  
Thy mother a lady, both lovely and bright ;  
The woods and the glens, from the towers which we see,  
They all are belonging, dear babie, to thee.  
O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo,  
O ho ro, i ri ri, etc.  
  
O fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows,  
It calls but the warders that guard thy repose ;  
Their bows would be bended, their blades would be red  
Ere the step of a foeman draws near to thy bed.  
O ho ro, i ri ri, etc.  
  
O, hush thee, my babie, the time soon will come,  
When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and drum ;  
Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you may,  
For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.  
O ho ro, i ri ri, etc."

Here we have Sir Walter Scott, the romancer, expressing a little of the mother's feeling, and a great deal of his own. The woods and glens, the bugle and the warders, the bended bows and the red blades, are all material out of which his romances were woven. It is the same with Tennyson. All the refinement, all the beauty of the Lincolnshire coast is in that exquisite imitation of an old lullaby with which we should like to close these desultory remarks :

" Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea,  
Low, low, breathe and blow,  
Wind of the western sea !  
Over the rolling waters go,  
Come from the dying moon and blow,  
Blow him again to me ;  
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.  
Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
Father will come to thee soon ;  
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
Father will come to thee soon ;  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
Silver sails all out of the west,  
Under the silver moon :  
Sleep my little one, sleep my pretty one, sleep."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### CANADA FOR EMIGRANTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—Would you be good enough to allow me space in your "Correspondence" columns to answer the disparaging remarks Mr. Williams makes with regard to the Canadian North-West in his letter published by you on December 3rd. He claims to know every province in Canada from Quebec to British Columbia; but, with all due deference to him, I am afraid his knowledge of the West is not very complete if he imagines that our "winter temperature for six months is mostly 40deg. below zero." I have lived in Canada for five years, and this is my third winter in Manitoba, and have so far found 40deg. below zero, or anything like it, to be very exceptional. To begin with, our winter only lasts five months, as ploughing, etc., goes on till about the middle of November (this year we were ploughing regularly on my place till November 22nd), and we begin sowing spring wheat about the middle of April. We rarely get even "zero" weather much before Christmas or after the middle of March. Again, "zero" sounds rather terrible at first; but anyone who has spent a

winter in Manitoba will, I think, agree that 10deg. below zero, with our usual bright, still weather, is infinitely preferable to a temperature of, say, 20deg. above zero at home. We certainly do have occasional spells of 30deg. and 40deg. below zero, and I have driven twenty miles in such weather without suffering any ill effects, and found it much pleasanter than "floundering about" in the mud and slush of warmer winters elsewhere. We do not regard ourselves as martyrs enduring "a life of comparative isolation and hardship," as we are not only "within touch of all the benefits of modern civilisation," but can actually partake of them, and can even reach the Homeland in eleven or twelve days. I must also take exception to his remarks re prices of land, as I could undertake to find him any number of good improved farms, with good buildings, wells, fences, etc., in any of the best farming districts in the West at prices between 20dol. and 30dol. an acre. I think it would puzzle Mr. Williams to find much of that land "equal to the best in Canada in matter of crop yield acre for acre." Mr. H. V. Jones, whose name will probably be familiar to Mr. Williams as a leading milling expert in the United States, in the course of an article in the holiday number of the *North Western Miller*, makes the following statements: "It is notable that the average yield of wheat in Western Canada—about twenty bushels the acre—is much larger than the yield in the United States. Only once since 1866 inclusive has the wheat yield of the United States been more than fifteen bushels to the acre. In twelve years of that period it was less than twelve bushels to the acre. In twenty years Western Canada has had only one crop—that of the dry year of 1900—that yielded less than twelve bushels to the acre." In conclusion, Sir, I would advise men with moderate capital to come straight to the North-West without giving New England the chance to fail to satisfy, provided they have sufficient pluck and perseverance to face possible "set-backs" incidental to farming in any part of the globe.—L. WILTSIRE, Reston, Manitoba.

### THE WORD "KINDLY."

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—I trust you will not think me either pedantic or hypercritical if I point out that the writer of an article entitled "The Kindly Fruits of the Earth" in the last number of your paper, is apparently labouring under a misconception as to the meaning of the epithet "kindly" in this connection. The word as used in the Litany means, of course, after their kind, and in no wise reflects on the genial nature of fruit and vegetable, which so appeals to your contributor. Thus she writes, "these fruits of the earth are indeed kindly," and the sentiment does more credit to her heart than to her head in this context. It is inadvisable that so widely read a paper as yours should do anything to foster a misinterpretation of the beautiful, albeit old-fashioned, English of our Prayer-book, hence my letter.—N.

### EXPERIENCES OF POULTRY-FARMING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—As one who is interested in this pursuit, and anxious to venture in a small way, I am sadly at a loss to reconcile the statements of your correspondents Rita Detmold and Mr. Tegetmeier. While I hold no brief for either side, and am only anxious to improve my imperfect knowledge, one thing strikes me as peculiar. Why is only one year's balance-sheet published, and that the first, and if the farm was so eminently successful, why was it sold, and for how much? Mr. Tegetmeier, I believe, has always made a point of stating that he has never known this industry answer financially after three years, so that so far the best of the argument is on his side.—IGNORAMUS.

### CURING OF HARD-MOUTHED DOGS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR.—Captain C. E. Radclyffe has drawn my attention to a controversy in the pages of COUNTRY LIFE, between himself and Sir H. Smith, on the curing of hard mouth in retrieving dogs. The controversy, as I understand, arose from a statement of Captain Radclyffe to the effect that hard mouth could be cured by giving the dog a made-up doll, or bundle, to retrieve that had prickles of some sort—blunt wire, perhaps, would be more like the thing than the pins suggested by Captain Radclyffe—buried in it, so that when the dog gave the bundle too hard a crunch the prickles would hurt its mouth. Sir H. Smith virtually seems to say that this will not do, because such a prickly bundle would dislince the dog to retrieve at all, and would, at all events, make him take such a light hold that it would not be possible for him to carry back heavy game at a good pace. In taking up this position Sir Henry Smith puts himself in a difficult situation. He is in the situation, for one thing, of having to prove a negative, which is proverbially hard, for his statement seems to assume that no dog ever has been cured of hard mouth by the means suggested, and also he is hazarding a statement that has theory only (unless I misunderstand him) for its basis; for I do not think that he says that he has tried the experiment and found it to have the result which he says that it would have. On the other hand, Captain Radclyffe has the evidence of actual experiment in his favour. The dummy bird, or rabbit, or bundle, stuffed with prickles, has been tried, and has been found to cure hard-mouthed dogs. It was a plan that my late father, General Hutchinson, who wrote "Dog-breaking," recommended in that book. I do not claim that he invented it, but it met with his approval; and I know cases in which it has proved efficacious. At the same time, I quite agree with Sir H. Smith in thinking that, if the dummy were made too prickly and too punishing, it would both be cruel and would have the probable effect of disgusting the dog with retrieving altogether, or would make him just mouth his game so gently that it would not be possible for him to retrieve it at the gallop. The dummy must be made with a certain art, so that the dog may be able to take a good firm hold without feeling the prickles, but so that the prickles may make themselves felt (yet even then without too piercing and punishing an effect) when the dog begins to scratch the quarry. On the question of treatment of "gun-shy" dogs,

which is also at issue between these gentlemen, I do not wish to intrude, further than to say that "gun-shyness" is a very relative term, varying from mere timidity, which may be overcome, to an apparently incurable vice. As both Captain Radclyffe and Sir Henry Smith have proved their respective abilities as very successful dog-breakers it is likely that in practice they would be much more in agreement than this controversy (in which one is probably using the term "gun-shy" in a sense widely different from the other) would seem to indicate. — HORACE G. HUTCHINSON.

**THE REGIMENTAL SHEEP,  
2ND BATT. DURHAM L.I.  
[TO THE EDITOR.]**

SIR,—The kindness of the British soldier to animals is well known, and does not require to be now emphasised; but the following story may be of interest to some of your readers. In December, 1900, the headquarters and wing of the 2nd D.L.I. were changing stations from Mandalay, Burmah, to Wellington, Madras, and at sea on the R.I.M.S. Canning. Christmas Day was spent on board that year. A day or two previously sports had been held, when the officers of the ship very kindly gave a special prize for the tug-of-war, viz., the subject of this "memoir," a sheep. The poor fellow was destined for the Christmas dinners of E Company, who won this event. They, however, decided to make a pet of him, and kept him as such, to accompany them to Wellington, Calicut, where he remained two years, and thence to England with the battalion, *via* Bombay. When the good ship Assaye arrived at Southampton, on December 15th, 1902, "Billy" (as he was generally known, though he was officially styled Robert Canning, and assigned the regimental number of 9999 by his "comrades" of E Company) was not allowed by the authorities to land with the battalion. He consequently remained in the horse-box on the Assaye in which he had travelled home, where he was most kindly treated by the officers of the ship; and it is related that he travelled to Bombay and back in this troopship no less than three times, after which he was eventually allowed to rejoin his regiment at Aldershot. He was a familiar object in the 3rd Brigade of the 2nd Division there, and a most enthusiastic "soldier"! accompanying the battalion on every occasion when allowed to do so. He was an extraordinarily intelligent animal, and many stories are told of his sagacity. He was never tied up in barracks, but was free to go where he pleased. When marching with troops, he always insisted on placing himself at their head, about 5yds. in front of the leading section of fours. I do not remember his ever attempting to go on church parade. Probably he soon realised when it was a Sunday by seeing the red tunics. He used to eat anything, almost, and enjoy bananas, rice, bread, hay, corn, and other luxuries; but paper was a favourite diet of his, and I hear from Aldershot now that, alas! poor Billy died there on January 6th, 1905, from the effects of eating a quantity of gilt and coloured papers that had been used for the Christmas decorations.—E. B. H.



**THE OLD  
BOATMAN.**

[TO THE EDITOR.]  
SIR,—The accompanying photograph, taken by Dr. J. H. Andries, is such a splendid likeness of an old boatman I have known for many years, that I hope you will be able to find a corner for it. We first made his acquaintance as children at the little out-of-the-way seaside place where we went every summer for our holidays. We used to make many an excursion with him on the "briny," and often, if the weather was fine, he and one of his sons would take us out line-fishing, and we would spend a long summer afternoon out at sea. How proud



we were of our first catch, and how good it tasted at supper! Our old friend is no longer able to go out with us. He tells us he is not as young as he was, and, indeed, at ninety-seven one might be said to have earned a little rest. Still, to look at his active figure and bright eyes one would never imagine that he had already passed the allotted three-score years and ten of man's life. His principal amusement now is to stand at the door of the little cottage halfway

up the cliff, where he has lived all his life. From here he commands a beautiful view of the bay and the little harbour down below, and as he smokes his pipe he watches with a half-contemptuous but kindly smile the men at their work below, secure in the conviction that they are great bunglers compared with what he and his contemporaries were in their day.—B. L.

**A RELIC OF FEUDALISM.**

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—The accompanying photograph of La Seigneurie, the seat of Mr. W. S. Collings, Seigneur of Sark, may perhaps interest your readers. The date of the house, a spacious and comfortable abode, though not architecturally imposing, is 1685, as shown on the sundial on the north-west corner. Mr. Collings is the nineteenth Seigneur and the third of his name, the first having been one Helier de Carteret, to whom the island was granted by

Queen Elizabeth in 1563. There are some interesting features in the extensive and well-kept grounds of the Seigneurie. On the terrace is a battery mounting three ancient guns, one of them a fine brass piece in excellent preservation, bearing the inscription, "Don de sa Majestie la Roye Elizabeth au Seigneur de Serq, A.D. 1572." An old chapel, which has never been consecrated, and is used only by the Seigneurial family and their dependants, has a thatched roof; and a small tithe-barn, of the same date as the house, is one of the few in existence that are still used for their original purpose, the revenues derived by the Seigneur from the island farmers being even now paid partly in kind.—H. M. W.

**A QUESTION OF  
SCENT.**

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—In the issue of COUNTRY LIFE for January 21st I see in "O'er Field and Furrow" a question about the fact that a fox hunted, or rather coursed, by a common dog loses his scent, and the conclusion in the article is that no sportsman can explain the reason why it should happen. I have hunted stags in France for a good many years, and it is a well-known fact to us that when any dog has been over the track of the hunted stag the hounds do not follow it as eagerly as before. When it happens even that one of the hounds is some way in front of the others—a not uncommon occurrence in the forest—the pack seems to hunt more reluctantly. The only easy explanation is that the scent of the dog or hound going over the track of the hunted animal is mixed up with that of the animal itself, and in consequence the scent is no more what it was. It is not that the hunted animal's scent is weaker, but that it is mixed up with some other. It is a well-recognised fact to us. We notice the same fact for every sort of animal we hunt, be it stag, roedeer, wild boar, hare, or fox.—VICOMTE DE PONCINS, Lailly, Loiret, France.

[Our correspondent seems to have rather misunderstood the writer of the article "O'er Field and Furrow." He contends that the fox actually loses its scent when coursed, and that hounds are unable to hunt him even beyond the point where the strange dog has left off. Strange as it may seem, a great many sportsmen are prepared to corroborate the views of the writer.—ED.]

**NATURE'S LARDER.**

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Near Boston, Lincolnshire, there is a certain row of hawthorn trees which bear a quantity of berries. In previous winters these berries have been eagerly devoured by numbers of fieldfares, thrushes, and the like birds in the neighbourhood, but this winter the berries remain untouched, in spite of the hard frosts both in November and recently, when food must have been difficult to obtain. Can it be that mysterious factor, instinct, tells them to reserve the berries for their sustenance in harder weather to come? If not, what is the reason?—L. PORTER.

